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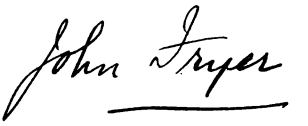




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THE JADE CHAPLET

IN TWENTY-FOUR BEADS

A COLLECTION OF SONGS, BALLADS, &c.

(From the Chinese)

BY

GEORGE CARTER STENT

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PREFACE.

Most of the songs in this collection have already appeared in print, but I am tempted to publish them in this form from the fact that the subjects must be new and strange to most people in England, and many of them, I feel confident, are novel even to foreigners in China.

Many songs that I have translated are not even in Chinese print; but I have been attracted by hearing them sung in the streets, made the singers come to my house and sing them while my teacher wrote them down verbatim; this process being repeated till I was assured that they were correct. By this means I not only got the words of the song, but the air, and I fancied I could also grasp the ideas they conveyed.

In regard to the translation of them, some I have rendered freely in whatever metre I thought would suit the

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subject; others I have rendered almost word for word with the Chinese; the object in all cases being to render the idea in a suitable manner. Without entering more fully into particulars, the reader will at a glance detect the difference.

My object has also been to embrace a variety of subjects. Some songs might have been omitted as inferior in language, thought and feeling, had the object been merely to present a collection of only the gems of Chinese fancy; but having it rather in view to show the difference of their poetic subjects and styles, it seemed to me they ought to be included in such a collection as the present.

I need not say that in Chinese literature there is an inexhaustible field for the historian, the novelist, the dramatist, and the poet. Some of these departments have been diligently cultivated by minds fitly trained and amply furnished for the task; but, so far as my knowledge goes, the songs of the people, redolent as they necessarily are of the deepest and most wide-spread tendencies of natural thought, have hitherto been comparatively neglected. It is also hoped that the student of popular poetry will here find matter worthy of his attention. Now that so much interest has been awakened in such subjects by the collections of Mr. Henderson, Mr. Wilkinson, and Mr. Coxe in England; by Miss Frere and Mr. Gover in India; by

the works of MM. Edélyi, Török, Gyulai, and Arany in Hungary; by Asbjörnsen's interesting stories of Norway; by Afansief's numerous fables of Russia; and most especially by the labours of Grimm, and the important contributions to this branch of literature so recently furnished by the learned Felix Liebrecht;—I have felt that some real translations of Chinese popular song would not be without their value as illustrations of the mental status of an important section of the human family.

With these few words of explanation, I launch my little volume in its strange attire on the sea of public opinion. It has at least the merit of being an attempt to bring the ideas and feelings of a distant and strange race before the public. If it succeeds, I shall congratulate myself on having had a front place among the pioneers who have opened up the lighter and more amusing literature of China.

G. C. S.

SHANGHAI: *6th September*, 1873.

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THE JADE CHAPLET.

THE BUTTERFLIES' CHOICE.[1]

WHOM shall I choose from this bevy of fairies?
Who shall be queen of "all under the sun?"
'Mid such charms I'm bewildered;—my choice ever varies,
Where *all* are so lovely, 'tis hard to choose *one*.

The fairest, the freshest of flowers bring hither,
With the dew on their petals like glistening pearls;
Blend their hues and arrange them with care ere they wither,
Spray by spray in the hair of these ravishing girls.

[1] The Emperor Ming, of the T'ang dynasty, used to cause the ladies of the palace to place fresh flowers in their hair, and at his signal attendant eunuchs would free a number of butterflies they had previously caught. The fortunate lady on whose head most butterflies alighted, attracted by the blossoms, was selected by the Emperor as his favourite. This was called *Tieh-hsing*, "Butterfly fortune," or "Butterfly luck."

Butterflies of all colours, the gayest—the brightest,
Rainbow-tinted—bespangled,—likewise hither bring;
Let the thrall of the captives be one of the lightest;
Displace not the *bloom* of one azure-tipped wing.

Now, watch me, and mark, when I hold up my finger,
Let their gauzy wings once more in freedom rejoice;
" *On whose head the butterflies love most to linger,*
" *That girl shall be queen—she's the butterflies' choice.*"

CROSSING THE BOUNDARY RIVER.[1]

WITH quivering lip she bade her guard farewell—
Her pride sustained her or she would have wept--
"You've served me thus far faithfully and well,
"Go! tell your lord his promise has been kept."

[1] *Wang-chao-chün* was one of the ladies of the palace in the time of the Emperor Yüan, of the 'Han dynasty. This monarch was so voluptuous, and had so many ladies that he would not put himself to the trouble of seeing the whole of them personally, but ordered an artist, named *Mao-yen-shou*, to paint each of their portraits so that he could inspect them at leisure in his own apartments.

All the ladies bribed the painter to induce him to produce flattering portraits, except *Wang-chao-chün* who, knowing that she was beautiful and needed no adventitious aid to enhance her charms, depended on them alone, and declined to solicit any favour from the artist. This annoyed the painter so much, that he portrayed such a plain face on his canvas, instead of her own beautiful one, that the Emperor, on inspecting it, tossed it aside with contempt, and thinking her the ugliest lady in the palace, promised her in marriage to the chief of a Tatar tribe with whom he had recently been at war, and whom he now wished to conciliate. When she came to take leave of the Emperor previous to starting on her journey, he was struck with her extraordinary beauty, and perceiving that he had been duped by the painter, ordered him to be at once beheaded.

They quit her side—and, oh ! how wistfully
She watches them the gloomy bastions near ;
The gates unclose, her pained eyes plainly see
Them enter, one by one,—and disappear.

That cruel wall[1] shuts out her native land,
Her home—loved kindred—every lovely scene ;
The meanest soldier of her little band
If not a friend—a *countryman* had been.

Alone—with strangers—(for a Tatar horde,
Equipped with bow and spear, looked scowling on ;)
She was the destined bride of their grim lord,
They were her escort, now her own had gone.

Now, smitten by her charms, he was sorry he had promised her to the Tatar Chief, and would gladly have retained her himself, but that his honour had been pledged, and he feared another rupture with the Tatars. He reluctantly parted with her, and she was escorted by a body of Chinese soldiers to the frontiers, where she was received by a troop of Tatars. The Emperor had kept his word ; she had been safely handed over to the Chief. But she herself, having performed her duty till she stepped on to another soil, had no intention of becoming the bride of a barbarian chief. On arriving at the "Black River," with a cry, she plunged into it, and the body of the poor girl was borne away on its dark waters, in presence of the Chief and his astounded followers, who were powerless to save her.

[1] The Great Wall.

What were her thoughts she kept within her breast,
Her grief—her anguish, was "not loud but deep;"
The rising tear she stubbornly suppressed,
They should not see a Chinese maiden weep.

"Be *his* bride—*his*—'twere better far to die!
"Life would be death—this wild my living grave."
With hands upraised—with one despairing cry,
She plunged into the Amoor's turbid wave.

FANNING THE GRAVE.[1]

'Twas spring,—the air was redolent
With many a sweet and grateful scent;
The peach and plum bloomed side by side,
Like blushing maid and pale-faced bride;[2]
Coy willows stealthily were seen
Opening their eyes of living green,—
As if to watch the sturdy strife,
Of nature struggling into life.

[1] "Fanning the Grave" and its sequel "The Wife Tested" have appeared in print before, but as they have been written only in prose and rather as anecdotes than translations, and have, in my opinion, but inadequately expressed the grim humour conveyed in the original, I have thought it not inappropriate to include the metrical version in this collection. The real name of the song is "The Butterflies' Dream," but I have preferred separating it into two parts and naming them as above.

[2] Among many other poetical names in novels, &c., wives are often called "Plum-blossoms," concubines "Peach-blossoms," and handmaidens "Willow-branches."

One sunny morn a Mr. Chuang
Was strolling leisurely along;
Viewing the budding flowers and trees—
Sniffing the fragrance-laden breeze—
Staring at those who hurried by,
Each loaded with a good supply
Of imitation sycee shoes,
To burn—for friends defunct to use—
Of dainty viands, oil and rice,
And wine to pour in sacrifice,
On tombs of friends who 'neath them slept.
(Twas "3rd of the 3rd" when the graves are swept.)

Chuang sauntered on:—at length on looking round,
He spied a cosy-looking burial ground;
"I'll turn in here and rest a bit," thought he,
"And muse awhile on life's uncertainty;
This quiet place just suits my pensive mood,
I'll sit and moralise in pleasant solitude."
So sitting down upon a grassy knoll,
He sighed—when all at once upon him stole
A smothered sound of sorrow and distress,
As if one wept in very bitterness.

Mr. Chuang, hearing this, at once got up to see,
Who the sorrowing mourner could possibly be,
When he saw a young woman *fanning a grave.*
Her "three inch gold lilies"[1] were bandaged up tight,
In the deepest of mourning—her clothes too were white.[2]
Of all the strange things he had read of or heard,
This one was by far the most strange and absurd;
He had never heard tell of one *fanning a grave.*

He stood looking on at this queer scene of woe,
Unobserved,—but astounded, and curious to know
The reason the woman was *fanning the grave.*
He thought, in this case, the best thing he could do
Was to ask her himself—so without more ado,
He hemmed once or twice—then bowing his head,
Advanced to the woman and smilingly said:
"May I ask, Madam, why you are *fanning that grave?*"

The woman, on this, glancing up with surprise,
Looked as though she could scarcely believe her own eyes,
When she saw a man watching her *fanning the grave.*

[1] Small-feet.

[2] White is the colour worn as mourning in China, as black is in England.

He was handsome,—and might have been thirty or more ;
The garb of a Taoist he tastefully wore ;
His kind manner soon put her quite at her ease,
So she answered demurely, " Listen, Sir, if you please,
And I'll tell you the reason I'm *fanning this grave.*

" My husband, alas ! whom I now (*sob, sob*) mourn,
A short time since (*sob*) to this grave (*sob*) was borne ;
And (*sob*) he lies buried in this (*sob, sob*) grave."
(Here she bitterly wept.) " Ere my (*sob*) husband died,
He called me (*sob*) once more (*sob, sob*) to his side,
And grasping my (*sob*),—with his dying lips said,
' When I'm gone (*sob, sob*) promise (*sob*) never to wed,
Till the mould is (*sob*) *dry on the top of my grave.*'

" I come hither daily to (*sob*) and to weep,
For the promise I gave (*sob*) I'll faithfully keep,
I'll not wed till the mould is (*sob*) *dry on his grave.*
I don't want to marry again (*sob*) I'm sure,
But poverty (*sob*) is so hard to endure,
And, oh ! I'm *so* lonely, that I come (*sob*) to try
If I can't with my fan help the mould (*sob*) *to dry ;*
And that is the reason I'm fanning his grave."

Hearing this, Chuang exclaimed, "Madam, give me the fan.
I'll willingly help you as much as I can
In drying the mould on your poor husband's grave."
She readily handed the fan up to Chuang,
(Who in magic was skilled,—as he proved before long)
For he muttered some words in a low under-tone,
Flicked the fan, and the grave was as dry as a bone;
"There," said he, "the mould's dry on the top of the grave."

Joy plainly was seen on the poor woman's face,
As she hastily thanked him—ere quitting the place,
For helping her dry up the mould on the grave.
Chuang watched her go off with a cynical sigh,
Thought he, "Now suppose I myself were to die,
How long would *my* wife in her weeds mourn my fate?
Would *she*, like this woman, have patience to wait
Till the mould was well dry on her poor husband's grave?"

THE WIFE TESTED.

(SEQUEL TO "FANNING THE GRAVE.")

On this curious grave-fanning scene
Chuang pondered as homeward he strolled;
At once told his wife where he'd been,
And the morning's adventure too told.
His wife, when the tale she had heard,
Screwed her brows up, and lengthened her face;
"That woman," said she—"'pon my word!
Beats all that is wicked and base!"

"Oh," said Chuang, "what is it to us
If she chooses to marry again?
Don't let this talk worry you thus,
Or cause you a moment of pain.
What may happen there's no one can tell,—
But *I* should quite satisfied be
Were *you* to do equally well,
If anything happened to me."

His wife cried, "I'd have you to know
That my family bears a good name;
Do you think I could sink down so low
As to stain it by falsehood or shame?
Should you, alas, from me be torn,
Could I ever another one love?
Till death I'd your memory mourn,
If I lie, there's a Heaven above!"

As 'twas said once before,
Chuang in magical lore
Was skilled,—so he thought he would test her;
And with consummate skill,
He feigned to be ill:
In lugubrious tones thus addressed her:—

"My love, smooth that brow,—
Let us have no more row,
What I just said was only in frolic;
But, oh! (here he winced,)
Ai ya! I'm convinced
I've got a slight touch of the colic."

He groaned himself hoarse—
His wife too, of course,
As in duty bound, burst out a crying;

"Fetch a doctor, my dear,
For I feel deuced queer;
I'm blest, if I don't think I'm dying!"

She went off in a crack,
And a doctor brought back:
They found poor Chuang kicking and sprawling;
As he writhed on the floor,
Sweat streamed from each pore,
And his groans they were truly appalling.

Bolus looked at the case,—
Pulled a very long face,—
Said he—while a strong draught he gave him,
"Let me do what I will,
He's beyond earthly skill,
All the drugs in the world wouldn't save him."

Chuang, at this rolled his eyes—
And his wife's bitter cries
When she heard it were truly heart-rending;
With a horrified mug
Chuang gave a slight shrug,
For he knew she was only pretending.

"My dear wife," said he,
"Come and listen to me;
Your grief 'tis, alas, unavailing;
I'm getting so weak,
That I've scarce strength to speak;
I feel that I'm rapidly failing.

"Swiftly onward death is stealing,
Soon I quit this earthly sphere;
Moments fly—each one revealing
Life is fleeting,—death is near.

"Death remorselessly will tear me
From all to which my fond heart clings;
From life—from thee—from love, will bear me
To the gloomy 'yellow springs.'[1]

"And, oh! when I'm dead,
Let it never be said,
That you suffered another to win you!
Your heart guard with care
From temptation and snare,
And true to my mem'ry continue.

[1] The grave.

"But—should *you* change your mind,
And to wed feel inclined,
(Here he groaned, and his voice became thicker)
The unfortunate man,
Wed as soon as you can,—
And the sooner you do it the quicker!"

"Oh! make your mind easy," she sobbing replied,
"I have said I won't wed, and I won't:
But, ah! what grave doubts your last words implied,—
Don't say them again, dearest, don't!
Tales of virtuous women in old books I've read,
And my bosom with ardour has glowed;
I'll emulate them, I have inwardly said:—
If I don't do the same I'll be blowed!"

Chuang looked up gratified,—
As if quite satisfied—
Groaned deeply,—his teeth firmly gritted;
Gave a hawk and a spit,
Rolled his eyes round a bit,
This sublunary sphere shortly quitted.

Within that room with many a sigh,
The widow's voice rose up in prayer,—
With none but *him*,—for mortal eye
Beheld not what was passing there:
Sweetly her voice the stillness broke
Of twilight hour, as thus she spoke:—

"He's gone;—his dear form I shall never more see,
His bright eyes no more will beam softly on me;
For the breast where so often I've pillowed my head,
Is cold to my touch, for, alas! he is dead."

With faltering step and streaming eyes,
The wife an undertaker sought;
Meekly discussed its length and size
And a most gorgeous coffin bought.
She dressed herself in deepest white,
The undertaker then she bid—
Place the departed out of sight,
And carefully nail down the lid.

His spirit tablet next she put
Upon a table near his head;
While she sat at the coffin's foot,
To watch and weep beside the dead.

[AIR: *A Traveller stopped at a Widow's Gate.*]

Chuang still *foxed*—for *he'd* no intention to die—
Determined yet further his widow to try,
So he transformed himself, in the twink of an eye,
To a young man, and entered the door.
In front of the tablet he piously stept,
Poured out a libation—knelt down, groaned and wept—
This awkwardish posture for some time he kept,
While bumping his head on the floor.

The widow ere long her eyes furtively raised,
Just to take a sly peep—but was greatly amazed,
For never before in her life had she gazed
On so handsome or well-dressed a man:
This vision somehow made her heart palpitate,—
It seemed that he must have been sent there by fate,
"Oh, wouldn't he make me a capital mate!"
In this strain her wicked thoughts ran.

She asked him his age—he replied, "Twenty-three."
"Well I never! you're just a year younger than me!
From henceforth we brother and sister will be—"
(Here she ogled him archly and sighed.—)

Her eyes such a volume of witchery spoke,
That Chuang began rather to relish the joke,
And determined at once on the masterly stroke
Of making his widow his bride.

In short, they made love, and the next day were wed,—
She cheerfully changing her white clothes to red.[1]
Excited by drink they were going to bed,—
When Chuang clapped his hand to his brow,—
He groaned.—She exclaimed,—"What are *you* dying too?
One husband I've lost and got married to you,
Now *you* are took bad.—Oh, what shall I do?
Can I help you? If so, tell me how."

"Alas!" groaned the husband, "I'm sadly afraid
The disease that I have is beyond human aid.
Oh! the sums upon sums I the doctors have paid!
There a remedy is to be sure:—
It is this:—*take the brains from a living man's head,—*
If not to be had, get, and mash up instead
Those of one who no more than three days has been dead:
'Twill effect an infallible cure!"

[1] White is the colour for mourning, red is worn on joyful occasions, such as weddings, &c.

The widow—by love and by liquor inflamed—
Thought a moment, "*Old Chuang's will just do!*" she exclaimed,—
"*A capital plan! Why the remedy named*
Is a trifle!" said she with a laugh:
I'll get them at once—you shall shortly avail
Yourself of the cure that can't possibly fail:
You shall have old Chuang's brains, I know they're not stale;
He's been dead but a day and a half!"

She grasped a kitchen chopper—before the tablet stood,
Said she "Chuang, I would really have been faithful, if I could,
Don't blame me if my heart is changed—it plainly was to be;
Your horoscope foretold it so;—it is your destiny.

"Here, at your '*spirit tablet*,' I dare speak nought but truth;
And oh! I do sincerely love a gay and gallant youth;
I feel assured your shade will not begrudge my happy fate,
But rather smile approval, and us both congratulate.

"Implicitly relying on your well-known common sense,
What I now do I'm certain will not give the least offence.

The head of my poor lover is racked with throbbing pains,
Your head contains the remedy—I have come to take your brains!"

She grasped the chopper savagely—her brows she firmly knit;
And battered at the coffin, until the lid was split.
But, oh! what mortal pen could paint her horror and her dread;
A voice within exclaimed "Hollo!" and Chuang popped up his head!

"Hollo!" again repeated he, as he sat bolt upright:
"*What made you smash my coffin in?—I see besides you're tight!*
You've dressed yourself in red, too! What means this mummery?
Let me have the full particulars and don't try on flummery."

She had all her wits about her, though she quaked a bit with fear.
Said she (the artful wretch!) "It seems miraculous, my dear!
Some unseen power impelled me to break the coffin lid,
To see if you were still alive—which, of course, you know I did!

"*I felt sure you must be living, so to welcome you once more,*
My mourning robes I tore off, and my wedding garments wore;
But, were you dead, to guard against all noxious fumes I quaffed,
As a measure of precaution—a disinfecting draught!"

Said Chuang, "Your tale is plausible, but I think you'd better stop;
Don't fatigue yourself by telling lies, just let the matter drop.
To test your faithfulness to me I've been merely shamming dead,
I'm the youth you just now married—my widow I've just wed!"

MORAL.

From this tale, married women, a moral deduce;—
Don't turn up your nose, or give way to abuse
When you hear of a poor widow *fanning a grave!*
You might, like my wife, get bowled out for your pains,
While attempting to steal a defunct husband's brains.
Do your best—but avoid supercilious pride,
For you never can tell what you'll do till you're tried:
And you might do a worse thing than *fanning a grave!*"

CHANG-PAN-PO, OR QUEEN MI'S DEVOTION.[1]

On the ancient road and o'er the barren mountain bitterly the conflict raged.

Red flowed the blood of the black-haired people into the soil;

As a lamp shining through yellow haze makes all around more gloomy,

So were the stars obscured by dust:—there was heard the wailing cry of spirits.

Ages hence *his* name will be revered for loyalty and devotion.

[1] The actual words of the following poem are to be found in a small volume entitled *Chang-pan-po tzŭ-ti-shu.* These are taken from the celebrated Historical play of *Chang-pan-po.*

The substance of this poem is to be found in the *San-kuo-chih,* also in the *San-kuo-yen-i.* The latter work, although not so reliable as the former, is yet read with greater pleasure by the majority of Chinese, containing as it does most of the events which occurred at that period, but more highly coloured. Many plays are derived from the same source, of which the play of *Chang-pan-po* is one.

How brave! He valued his life as if 'twere but a feather's weight.

At Chang-pan-po the bloody sweat in streaming torrents fell:

Exhaust and faint was General *Chao-tzù-lung.*[1]

Liu-hsüan-te[2] fled for refuge towards Chiang-ling,[3] intending there his forces to recruit,

But unexpectedly, on the Tang-yang road, encountered the pursuing troops.

Fierce was the fight around him; midst the forest of swords and spears monarch and ministers were scattered.

Amid the tramp of marching in the wilderness, and the hoarse shouts of slaughter, the Crown Prince was lost.

Queen *Mi*[4] carried *A-tou* in her bosom.

[1] *Chao-tzù-lung.* A general, and the hero of the play, called variously *Chao-tzù-lung*, *Chao-yun*, and *Tzu-lung.*

[2] *Liu-hsüan-te*, not at this time Emperor, was the Emperor of Shu, afterwards *Hou-Han*; according to the best historian, *Chu-tzu-yang*, who considers him as being the rightful possessor of the throne. Another historian, *Ssu-ma-kuang*, styles *Liu-hsüan-te* a rebel, and invariably writes the word "inyasion" in reference to any expedition to the frontiers.

[3] In Hu-pei.

[4] *Mi-fu-jên*, one of *Liu-hsüan-te's* two queens,—the other, *Kan-fu-jên*, was the *mother* of *A-tou*, but *Mi-fu-jên* was the *preserver* of the child,—sacrificing her own life to save his, the more worthy of praise as not being the child's *own* mother.

Night came on apace, her tears fell trickling in the autumn breeze.

Wounded by an arrow, from midnight senseless she lay upon the desert turf,

With but the faintest breathing—one little thread not snapped—until the break of day,

When the queen again revived from her death-like faint,

That delicate and graceful body cold as ice.

Suddenly by her side she heard the autumn crickets chirp,

Felt too the arrow-wound's throb-throbbing pain:

Slowly she opened wide her "almond eyes" and fluttering fire-flies saw;

Raising her drooping breast she then perceived *A-tou* still nestled there:

The fallen leaves thickly bestrewed the ground, her form was covered with the ice-cold dew;

She saw far far away in space the few and fading stars not yet dispersed, and the moon's shadowy slanting rays.

Weak, fearful as she was, the trembling queen sat up,

And saw the cold mist settled o'er the earth, the withered herbage beaten down:

Her dark-blue sleeves concealed by dust, her skirt all soiled;

Her blood-stained shoes—her stockings red with gore.

Stretching her hand towards her bosom to caress the Prince,

She perceived that he was motionless and silent;

Queen *Mi* became alarmed, her colour fled, she gazed intently on him:—

In truth the little *A-tou* was sleeping soundly, having fairly tired himself and cried himself to sleep.

Turning her face towards the tender child she cried "Awake!"

And saw the Prince's tiny hand gently unclose, his eyes slowly open wide.

Seeing her, with anxious brow and pouting lips

His little face he in her bosom thrusts, and tumbles it in search of nutriment.

The Queen distressed, exclaimed, "My heart! my life! arouse!

My child! and does he want his breast? Ah, you are hungry!"

She could only sigh, "Oh, bitter fate, my little one is famishing!

And I know not whither your own mother wanders!"

Closely Queen *Mi* embraced the Prince, her heart oppressed with grief.

The little *A-tou*, patient and good, never even moaned.

At this time the mists gradually disappeared, the sky became bright;

The sun appeared, reddening each mountain summit and tree top.

She then perceived upon the banks of that ensanguined stream the cawing crows,

And amidst heaps of slain were arrows, broken bows.—

Betattered tents, gongs, drums and flags bestrewed the ground;

War steeds in numbers too, saddleless, in wild confusion pranced and neighed.

Sad, sad at heart Queen *Mi* looked o'er the plain.

Viewing the scene she thinks "'Tis hard to tell if he, the Emperor[1]'s preserved;

Perhaps Queen *Kan* has also lost her life:

I also do not see *Mi-shu*, *Mi-fang*,[2] nor yet *Chien-yung*,[3]

No tidings either of *Chang-fei*,[4] the third brother.

[1] *Lit.* '*Huang-shu*, the Emperor's uncle. *Liu-hsüan-te* at this time had not been proclaimed Emperor of the 'Hou'Han:—he was the uncle of 'Han, so that the queen generally speaks of him as "the Emperor's uncle."

[2] *Mi-shu* and *Mi-fang*, two generals, brothers of Queen *Mi*.

[3] *Chien-yung*, one of *Liu-hsüan-tê's* generals.

[4] *Chang-fei*, *Liu's* third brother, also a general.

They must, when with their troops amid the turmoil of the strife, have fallen with *Chang-shan's Chao-tzù-lung.*[1]

Should it be that Prince and Minister all have fallen by *Tsao*[2] the rebel's hand,

And I, a woman, with no place to fly to, and I fear unable to nourish this poor orphan child."—

The queen indulging in this strain, thought but of death.

But looking on *A-tou*, nestling in her breast, she dissolved in tears,

And sighed: "His father has wandered half his life, and has but this one child.

A drop of bone and blood, a child, a very babe.

Now, if I would prove my thorough faithfulness to *him*,[3] this child must die.

But when I reach the 'yellow springs'[4] how could I face the ancestors of *Liu's* house?"

In this distressing strait the queen bent down her head and wept,

[1] *Chao-tzù-lung's* native place. He is called Chang-shan's *Chao-tzù-lung.*

[2] *Tsao* was the king of Wei and at war with *Liu*; the queen speaking of him invariably calls him the rebel *Tsao*, or *Tsao* the rebel.

[3] Queen *Mi* as a faithful wife would feel bound to immolate herself on the death of her husband, but if she does so what is to become of the child.

[4] When I die.

When, suddenly, in the distance, she saw the rebel troops marching o'er the plain.

Anxious, unable, too, to tend her gaping wound,

She clenched her silvery teeth; supporting herself by the head of a tomb, she raised her form erect;

And by the roadside saw a cotter's house that by the rebel *Tsao* had been destroyed by fire;

But half the earthen walls remained, these would conceal her form.

Embracing fast the child, fainting at every step she struggled on.

Brave woman! for this orphan's sake she nobly bore her pain!

She reached the earthen wall, and round about a well just by its side

Saw footprints, blood stains on the tangled herbage, the ground all red.

She felt the racking agonising pain of her deep wound;

Her panting breath came short, and hard to catch;—while from her empty chest

Came trembling plaintive sounds; sweat streamed down her pallid face; she closed her beauteous eyes.

And bowed her gem-like neck! her golden ornaments came out, releasing clouds of soft dishevelled hair.

But, ah! she indistinctly sees—it must be—yes, the sheen of banners!

She gasps! she hears, or thinks she hears, the roll of battle drums:

In danger, with strength exhausted, prone upon the ground.

Suddenly she heard a voice exclaim, "Ah! she must be hidden here!"

With precious sword and "spirit spear" reeking with the smell of blood;

His jewelled mail and silvered robe besmeared with dust;

His lustrous eyes, so large and bright,

Showed a devoted heart, a noble mind.

Queen *Mi* was hid behind the old well's boundary stone.

And *Chao-yün's* horse came eastward of the earthen wall:

He saw the queen clasp *A-tou* to her breast, and sit with drooping head,

So grieved, so sad; her hair disordered, her face all soiled, her beauty spoilt.

Chao-tzù lung in haste sprang from his saddle, stuck spear in ground, and fastened up his steed.

Raised up his robe, knelt down and made obeisance.

Bowing again his head, he said, "My queen has been alarmed, the Prince I trust is well?

This is all *Chao-yün's* fault, a general with no ability."

Queen *Mi* with mingled grief and joy exclaimed, "The Emperor, is he alive?"

Tzù-lung replied, "He broke through the dense mass that surrounded him and fled direct eastward."

The queen exclaimed, "The fortune of the Emperor is the Empire's fortune; who went with him?"

Tzù-lung bowing his head, replied, "*I-tê* accompanied him."

Queen *Mi*, nodding her head, said, "General, no need for ceremony."[1]

Chao-yün arose and bowing, said,

"My honoured lady, I beseech you, deign but to ride your servant's horse,

And when we break their ranks, then tightly clasp the Prince, and do not be alarmed."

The queen exclaimed, "And you will fight on foot?" The hero cried, "Yes, even so.

Depend but on your servant's zeal, bravery and loyalty.

Quick, I beseech you, lady, haste, mount the horse.

[1] The general during the dialogue has been on his knees.

And *Chao-yün* dares to risk his life to be imperial guardian back to camp."

Queen *Mi* heaved one long sigh, and with falling tears

Exclaimed, "Now do I know and see my husband's clear perception.

'Tis hard to tell, yet his clear eye could read and know his man.

That *Chao-tzŭ-lung* in time of need would be to him his greatest help—a brother."[1]

Timid and weak, with strengthless limbs the queen knelt down and said:

"This kneeling posture is not to the *general* but to his *loyalty*."

Alarmed, the brave general fell upon his knees, and lowly bent his head.

The noble woman in plaintive tones with bitter falling tears

Looked at the brave general, and sadly pointing to her breast,

Exclaimed, "Have pity on this poor, bewildered, helpless babe!

His father, now alas! is getting old and at his knees he has no other child.

[1] *Lit.* shoulders and arms.

Your Prince, this precious burden, I now entrust to you:

His sad fate—life, death, safety or ruin,—all rest with you.

I look to you, one-half to your loyalty and faith, and one-half to your hoard of hidden virtue,

And *Hsuan-tê* will not be alone in gratitude to you for this great act of kindness:

The ancestors of *Liu's* house now mouldering in their graves will all be deeply grateful too."

Chao-tzù-lung, his heroic heart racked with grief, could only sigh assent with bended head.

Queen *Mi* arose, loosened her broidered scarf,

Took *A-tou* from her breast, and raised him in her arms;

With saddened heart, her beauteous face close to the Prince's pressed,

Crying, "My child, this day our destiny's complete, mother and child must separate.

My little injured one! ah! heed not thy mother's tender sighs, nor fret for her.

Nay do not cry, my child, and when you see your parents,

Say that your *other* mother—enough, enough, you *would* speak for me, but, alas, you cannot."

Then turning to the loyal man she said, "Now I take *A-tou* and deliver him to you;

Careful injunctions to you I know I need not give.

But, oh! when horse and man collide—when swords and lances flash, *they* have no eyes.

Then look you to the Prince, guard well his life, protecting too your own.

My child is delicate, his little bones are frail.

Place him beneath your corselet, next your heart, yet not too tightly, nor so very loose."

Tzù-lung exclaimed: "Lady, I entreat you, mount my horse, and in your bosom hold the Prince.

I then will, with my single spear, on foot, fight through the rebel force."

The queen, with solemn mien, exclaimed, "General, you mistake:

I, a woman, suffering from a painful wound, how could I accompany you?

Besides, I cannot ride; 'tis *you* must use the horse.

How could you hope, on foot, with your one spear to fight your way through hosts?

Take it. One *A-tou* saved by you is better far than thousands like myself:

This child is the successor of *Liu's* house—his heir.

Man may live till a hundred years, then comes the 'great limit'—at last he *must* die.

My death to-day will be a blessed one, and its cause fully known.

Make for me many obeisances to the Emperor.

Bid him not be sorrowful but ever study his people's welfare.

With his 'three-foot blade' sweep clean the rebels, and exterminate his country's foes.

One hand supporting high the bright red sun, and making glorious and prosperous the dynasty of Han.

Remember well my words—take the child, and go!"

The loyal hero would not take the Prince, but besought the queen to accompany him:

The impetuous woman, steeling her heart, placed down the crying babe;

Turned her fair form, plunged into the ancient well, and gave her spirit up to Hades;

Her noble spirit returning back to heaven:

But her beauteous form was hid in the cold and lonely waters of the well over which the zephyrs played.

Her spotless life, her words, her acts, all were admirable.

Her nobleness and loyalty were bright as the red sun in the azure sky.

Chao-tzŭ-lung, with his spear overturned the earthen wall and covered in the well.

Burst through the cordon that surrounded him, saved *A-tou*, and safely joined *Liu*.

The composition of my leisure hours has made me weep.
The entrusted orphan's fate
I've writ, that ages hence men shall feel ashamed and
emulate a woman.

CHAO-TZÙ-LUNG.

(SEQUEL TO CHANG-PAN-PO.)

WHAT true "Son of Han"[1] knows not "*Chao-tzù-lung's*"[2] name?
Front and foremost 'tis writ in the annals of fame;
His deeds both in cottage and palace are sung,
Even infants are taught to lisp "*brave Chao-tzù-lung!*"

Whose step was so light? He could outrun the deer:
Who braver than he? His heart knew not fear.
Whose voice was more gentle? Whose eye was more bright?
A child with his friends, but a lion in fight.

How often in many a hard-foughten field,
Has *his* daring breast been an emperor's shield!

[1] Chinese.
[2] *Chao-tzù-lung.* One of the generals of *Liu-pai.*

E'en his bitterest foe by his prowess was struck,
And cried, "He *is* brave, his whole body 's *all* pluck!"[1]

But oh! what a lustre did *one* noble deed shed,
Like a halo of light, round the young hero's head!
By its bright rays encircled that action sublime
Comes down to us softened and hallowed by time.

In the carnage at Chang-pan[2] was heard a wild shriek,
So startling—so piercing—it blanched every cheek:
"Where 's the child—the young crown prince—the little A-tou?
He 's lost! He is dead! He is left with the foe.

Oh, save him!—my infant!—your Emperor's son!
The child of his old age!—he has but that one!
You rescued his mother—save *him!*" and she clung—
She—a queen—to the knees of the *brave Chao-tzù-lung!*

[1] *Hun shên tu shih tan.* This expression was first made by *Liu-pai*, who witnessing his bravery, exclaimed in a burst of admiration, "His whole body 's *all* pluck"! To this day he is commonly spoken of as *Hun tan chiang chun*, "The all pluck general."

[2] *Chang-pan*, or *Chang-pan-po.* Name of the place where the battle was fought.

Twice before had he dashed through the midst of the strife,
Dealing death to his foes, but each time saving life:[1]
He *then* fought for honour,—*now*, more noble—more brave—
He a third time dared death a poor infant to save.

Through the ranks of the foe he once more fiercely fought,
And o'er that vast plain the child eagerly sought
'Mongst the dead and the dying—but ah! who can tell
His delight when he found it asleep near a well!

Unloosing his mail, he tore open his vest—
Placed it tenderly—still fast asleep—in his breast;
There he felt it was safe, for he knew every dart
That would harm that dear babe must be aimed at his heart.

Far away the blue smoke of his camp fires is seen,
There, the poor mother waits—but the foe lies between:
What recks he! He thinks them a handful at most;
With that child in his bosom, he could conquer a host.

Again he charged madly, while every blow
From his death-dealing brand laid an enemy low:

[1] He had just saved a wounded general and the queen.

He cuts through them all, and the battle field rung
With the triumphant shout of the *brave Chao-tzù-lung!*

They pursue us! On! On! faster still trusty steed!
The life of a prince rests on your strength and speed!
Brave horse! How he gallops! proudly arching his neck,
For the heir of an empire he bears on his back.

With nostrils distended—with wild glaring eyes,
On! On! faster—faster—the gallant horse flies:
Reeking—panting—nay *sobbing*, with strength almost gone,—
With heart well-nigh bursting he still gallops on!

Hark! the clatter of hoofs—they are drawing more near;
The hoarse cries of his foes—they are close in his rear:
A loud shout which even his stout heart appals—
A crash! and the jaded horse staggers and falls!

The child!—he is safe!—up my poor beast once more!
Let us cross but this plain and all danger is o'er:
Up and on!—and once more the steed's mettle is tried,
As pursued and pursuers gallop on side by side.

On again, gallant steed, we must fight as we fly!
On! with firmly clenched teeth and a resolute eye,
He whirls round his blade, blows fall thick as hail,
But oh! how he guards that dear child 'neath his mail!

On, fighting and flying, their track o'er the plain
Is marked by the corses of foes he has slain;
Will it never be ended—that unequal fight?
On! one struggle more! there's the river in sight!

"*Chang-fei*,[1] on your life keep those demons at bay,
I have the child safe!" he has just strength to say:
He crosses the bridge, and before him he sees
The mother awaiting him under those trees.

And what a glad shout did that brave hero greet,
As he sprang from his horse—threw himself at her feet—
And exclaimed, as exhausted he sank on the ground,
"*Thy dead son is living, he was lost and is found.*"[2]

[1] *Chang-fei.* Another of *Liu-pai's* generals.

[2] *Liu-pai*, the father of the child, thought so much of the heroism of *Chao-tzù-lung*, that he dashed the babe to the ground as worthless. The incidents contained in this ballad are also to be found in the *San-kuo-chih*, and are historical facts.

ADVENTURES OF "TINY RILL."

"BUBBLING SPRING" had a daughter—the clear "Tiny Rill,"
Who could scarcely have been an inch wide;
When she longed for a change, so she stole down the hill,
And trickled away from "Spring's" side.

"Tiny Rill" ran away with no thought of fear,
And careless of what she had done;
She was free—and her bright face, transparent and clear,
Gleamed and glistened again in the sun.

Over green fields and meadows on "Tiny Rill" ran;
(The little precocious coquette!)
She was pretty she knew, and thus early began
Gaily flirting with all that she met.

Her favours on both sides she'd gracefully shower,
Regardless to whom they might be;
One moment she'd kiss the sweet lips of a flower,
The next—lave the root of a tree.

Put your face down to hers,—your hand merely dip
In her bosom—a clear draught to quaff;—
She would slip through your fingers, or glide by your lip,
Rippling off with a silvery laugh.

On ran "Tiny Rill," and the farther she went,
The deeper and broader she grew;
Her clear limpid beauty and winding ways lent
A charm to the scenes she passed through.

All at once a great change came o'er "Tiny Rill;"
She wore not the same placid look;
More giddy—more joyous,—more beautiful still,
She now brawled along "Purling Brook."

Whirling,
Twirling,
Recklessly hurling
Herself 'gainst the rocks in frolicsome fun.
Splashing,
Flashing,
Incessantly dashing
Her glittering spray in the face of the sun.

She would leap from one rock to another in play,—
Tumble down on her pebbly bed ;
Like a Naiad, let the dazzling, sun-smitten spray
Fall, in prismatic gems round her head.

Sometimes she would lash herself into a rage,
And rush roaring and seething along,
Till a bit of smooth ground would her anger assuage,
And she'd liquidly murmur a song.

"Purling Brook's" voice was clear as a "*gold floating bell*;"[1]
But, oh! what melodious tones
Her bosom produced as it rose and it fell,
In sighs over "musical stones!"[2]

Ere long she gave over her frolicsome ways,
They passed like a phase of some dream ;
Imperceptibly gliding from wild "Brook-hood's" days
Into translucent "Pure Crystal Stream."

[1] *Fou-chin-chung.* This is probably poetical imagery, in allusion to the musical sound of running water. Frequent mention, however, is made in ancient books of a certain metal which floated on the water.

[2] *Ching.* It is said that the musical properties of this peculiar stone were first discovered by some priests, who, while performing their ablutions in a brook were attracted by the sweet sounds caused by the water rippling over it. Its uses as a bell are too well known to need comment.

She *was* pure as crystal—just take a sly peep
In her eyes, but don't *too* rudely stare :—
You'll see in their depths—down, down, oh ! so deep,
Yourself clearly photographed[1] there !

There wasn't a flower that grew on her banks,
But would waft her a sweet-scented sigh ;
They all offered love, but with murmuring thanks,
She demurely and gently passed by.

She glided on smoothly and quite self-possessed,
Unless, as was sometimes the case,
The willow would bend down and toy with her breast,
Or the gentle breeze dimple her face.

The meanderings of "Pure Crystal Stream" were soon past,
And she now "Flowing River" became ;
But contact with filthy pollution at last,
Soiled her hitherto unsullied name.

She indeed looked majestic as onward she flowed,
And her breast heaved and swelled with the tide,

[1] A slight liberty—mirrored or reflected would have perhaps been more correct.

For handsome and gallant ships now proudly rode
On her broad bosom—near a mile wide.

But, alas! all her pureness and clearness were gone,
She could never more transparent be:
Through marshes and swamps "Flowing River" rolled on,
And rushed into the arms of "Deep Sea."

Soon she mingled with "Billows" and big "Mountain waves,"
And from one to another was tossed;
Till, like other poor "Rills" who had thus found their graves,
She became irretrievably lost.

"Bubbling Spring" mourned her absence for long dreary years,
And daily he weeps for her still:
For what are all rivers and streams but the tears
"Spring" sheds for the lost "Tiny Rill?"

THE CHAIN PUZZLE.[1]

My lover, yes, my lover has come!
I-ya-i-ya-yu.
And has presented me with a chain puzzle,
With nine, oh! nine chain links;
Both hands—both my hands cannot open it;—
I take a knife to sever it,
But I cannot cut it asunder.
I-tu-ya-tu-i-tu-yu.

Whoever can open this my chain puzzle
With nine, oh! nine chain links,
I will be—I will be his wife,
And he shall be my husband—
Yes, my husband.
I-tu-ya-tu-i-tu-yu.

[1] The Chain Puzzle is given without any attempt at versification, and, not from any special merit the composition may possess, but as a fair specimen of the weak and diluted style of songs, we in the West call "sentimental." It is translated almost literally.

My lover lives in the city;
I live in a road-side village;
And I—yes I
Live in a road-side village;
Although not very far from you,
I am shut out southward of the city gate,
And 'tis difficult for us to meet.

I-tu-ya-tu-i-tu-yu.

Could we but change into a pair of birds
We'd soar up—up to heaven:—
Fly, yes, fly even up to heaven,
And then as rapidly descend.
There is besides a ship, yes, a ship—
There we would meet.

I-tu-ya-tu-i-tu-yu.

The snow-flakes whirling round,
Fell three feet deep:—
Three feet three inches deep,
And whirling, whirling formed
A beauteous snowy being
Who in my bosom fell;—
I clasped him to my breast.

I-tu-ya-tu-i-tu-yu.

The first watch struck.

I-ya-i-ya-yu.

The second watch,
I waited for you, yet you did not come,
No, you did not come.
The third watch,
The drum told me 'twas midnight.
The fourth watch, the drum—
The drum and cocks proclaimed the hour.

I-tu-ya-tu-i-tu-yu.

The fifth watch,
The crowing cocks announced the dawn,
Day, yes, day has broke :—
The flowered curtains—
Ivory couch—
Embroidered coverlet—
Downy pillows :—
I think while on my pillow,—
I think, oh ! think,
My lover once gone will not come—
No, he will not come !
He abandons me to my thoughts,—
He causes me to think,—
And I become love sick.

I-tu-ya-tu-i-tu-yu.

THE ENCHANTED TREE.

In the palace at Peking an old ash[1] tree stands;
No one can tell in what reign it was planted;
Or whether by mortal or unearthly hands,—
But everyone knows the old tree is enchanted.[2]

Strange stories are told of this wondrous ash tree,
Of weird sounds at night, as of sobbing and weeping;
In daylight some even assert they can see
Myriads of eyes from its foliage peeping.

At a dynasty's close—there are heard wailing cries,
As if restless spirits sad dirges were singing
'Mid its branches and leaves:—when an emperor dies,
The leaves emit moans as if "air-bells"[3] were ringing.

[1] *Huai.* This is a very beautiful overspreading tree, the yellow blossoms of which are used as a dye. Its medicinal and other properties are too well known to need recapitulation here.

[2] This tree is supposed to be in one of the courts of the palace, and is known by the name of *Shêng-yin-mu*, "the sounding tree."

[3] See *Chang-liang's* Flute, p. 117.

When a minister true to his country remains,
Or a just and good monarch the throne has ascended,—
Then the old tree breaks into melodious strains,
As if of stringed music with sweet voices blended.

Each bright yellow flower golden music distils
Drop by drop on the senses of those blessed to hear it :
The tree is *all* music,—its melody thrills
Through the hearts of all those who may chance to be near it.

Alas ! 'tis not often such music is heard,
(Will the tree never more its sweet concerts be giving?)
Old folks shake their heads, for it has not occurred
E'en once—in the life of the oldest now living.[1]

[1] A proof of bad government in the poet's opinion.

THE TWELVE MONTHS MANY STORIES.[1]

First Month.

'Tis the first month of the new year,
My husband is going to the wars ;
He goes to sweep the frontiers.
The illuminations are without amusement to me.
I was preparing his bow and arrows, when I suddenly heard the sound of drums, gongs and uproar in the street.
Arranging my husband's baggage, how could I find time to go and look at it?
I have made several garments, and have well quilted the coats and jackets.
The tears flowed plentifully from my eyes as I was sewing.

[1] This song, with several others, was read in English, and a portion of it sung, in Chinese, by the writer before the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, in Shanghai, on 5th June 1871. The songs in English and Chinese, with the music, were afterwards published in the Society's volume for 1871–2.

At parting innumerable sorrows arise, like the tempest arising out of a calm, suddenly to dissever our union.
Oh, my husband, we are to be separated!
When shall we meet again?

Second Month.

'Tis mid-spring; the "*Chun-fên*,"[1]
My husband is going to the wars, and I am very sorrowful.
I pour out a full cup of wine, to speed him on his journey.
"*You* go for honour and fame; *I* am left at home to watch the solitary lamp.
I only wish you to soon acquire honour; for when *your* flag is unfurled, you *must* be victorious.
Listen, husband; send me many letters of your welfare.
The north wind is cold on the frontiers, you must take great care of yourself."
When I had made an end of speaking, he mounted into the saddle, and started on his journey.
Yet in his heart he was loth to go!
At every ten steps, he nine times turned his head.
Both our hearts were full of grief and trouble.

[1] Name of the period. Spring equinox, about 20th March.

Third Month.

'Tis "Pure Brightness,"[1] the third month,
The peach blossoms are red, the willows are green,
And the appearance of spring is bright and beautiful.
My husband is from home; *who* will visit his ancestors' graves?
This I *ought* to, and *will* do myself.
The "spirit-tablets" of his ancestors are placed in the middle hall.
Paper-money must be burnt to satisfy their expectations.
In the distress of my heart, I cried to my husband's dead aged parents.
"Your son is at the frontiers; oh, protect, and keep all sickness from him!"
I then returned to my chamber.
On looking in the mirror, how pallid my countenance was.
Although not separated so *very* long from my husband, yet I have become quite emaciated.

Fourth Month.

'Tis the beginning of summer;[2] the fourth month is come!
It is neither cold nor hot; this *would* be pleasant for us, this agreeable weather.

[1] About the 5th April. [2] About the 5th May.

Yet my husband is absent; this solitude is hard to bear.
I bend my head to look at my red embroidered shoes.
"My husband is from home; who is to come and admire you?"
My body is fallen away to a shadow.[1]
I cannot take either tea or food, and I am always melancholy.[2]
'Twas but the other day that I laughed at *others* suffering from love-sickness, now *I* am suffering from it also.
Yet 'tis my destiny, and I ought to bear it.
I fear at night when the moon shines on the flower terrace.
I am *so* lonely, and I sleep with my clothes on, for I am indifferent even to untying my silken girdle.

Fifth Month.

'Tis the fifth month,—the "dragon-boat festival."
I remember last year at this time, how my husband and I drank the "*hsiung-'huang*" wine together.
We drank till exhilarated, and then we went together to look at the opening pomegranate blossoms.
But to-day, how very lonely, how solitary!

[1] *Lit.* like split wood.
[2] *Lit.* my eyebrows will not open.

I never wear a "spirit charm," nor a sprig of the "*ai*" leaf in my hair now.

This year, this festival, how happy is it!

Yet I am a recluse, and must look after empty rooms.

I sleep with my clothes on.

In my dreams my husband is with me, but I suddenly awaken and find only myself within the red silken curtains, and the moon shining on the gauze windows.

Others are annoyed that the nights are too *short*,

I am vexed that they are so *long*.

I cannot sleep till daybreak; till I hear the crowing of the cocks.

Sixth Month.

'Tis the sixth month, and the heat is difficult to bear.

My husband is gone to the wars, and my mind is very uneasy.

We have been separated now half-a-year, and I have not yet received a letter from him.

I have burnt incense before Buddha, and "Kuan-Yin," the goddess of mercy, the saviour of those in distress and difficulty.

"Protect him, so that he may soon be on his homeward road!"

I will have Buddhist books printed.
I ask of divination; I entreat the gods, and have the fortune of the wayfarer told.
I draw one of the slips, 'tis a long one; one of good omen.
Husband and wife will again be united.
Yet at the bottom of my heart I thought, "This divining, this drawing of fortune-telling slips, I cannot believe to be true.
The good omen of the wayfarer will not come to pass.
After all it will turn out unfortunate.
He will not return!"

Seventh Month.

'Tis the beginning of autumn;[1] the seventh month.
'Tis the month that "*Niu-lang*"[2] and "*Chih-nü*" meet.
This morning they cross the "Silver river,"[3] and this evening they again are united.
To-morrow morning early they will again separate.
They love one another as well as we, and yet they have to separate.
Worldly affairs cannot always be as we should wish.

[1] About the 7th August.
[2] See note 6, in my Vocabulary of the Pekinese Dialect.
[3] Milky Way.

Even gods and fairies have their separations and unions, their sorrows and joys !

Why then should not I, a mortal, have my sorrows at separation ?

I am restless ; I cannot sleep.

My eyes look up to "Heaven's River,"[1] and I soliloquise :

" *Chih-nü !* Star ! Come down from heaven, and share my solitude and distress!"

Eighth Month.

'Tis the eighth month, the middle of autumn.

The gazers at the moon are in the upper stories.

So too am I, but I am lonely and solitary !

I am constantly melancholy.[2]

The wild geese fly southward, and the "Golden wind"[3] comes in cold fitful gusts.

My husband is at the frontiers.

This wind blows on *him*, and must penetrate through his clothing.

In the depths of my heart I am *so* sad.

I am daily sorrowful when I think of my husband.

[1] Milky Way. [2] *Lit.* eyebrows cônstantly frowning.
[3] Autumn breeze.

I *know* that I am falling away, the buttons tell me so, for my garments get gradually looser.
When shall I be relieved of this solitude!
A man's heart is not like a woman's!
Surely he cannot have taken another!
Become infatuated with a fresh flower, and forgotten the old!

Ninth Month.

'Tis "*Chung-yang*," the ninth month.
My husband is gone to the wars and not yet returned.
Only just united, and so suddenly to be separated.
Who would easily grow accustomed to this misery?
I look forward with anxiety for his return.
The hot weather is over, and the cold has arrived.
'Twould be really pleasant to be united now.
The days are short, and the nights *so* long.
I cannot avoid thinking of him.
I am incurably love-sick!
Even the sea fairies' antidote "*ling-tan*," cannot cure it.
If I wish to get the better of my sickness, there is no remedy for it, unless I see him again.
My complexion is not the same as formerly.

If the flower has not rain or dew, that also will wither.
And shall not I, a fair young woman, who does not see her husband, do so too?

Tenth Month.

'Tis the tenth month; "*Hsiao-yang-chun.*"
Earth and sky are cold, and the snow falls fast and thickly.
My husband is at the frontiers.
There is no one to inquire if *he* is cold or hot.
The mountains are high and the waters are deep that separate us.
I am sorrowful for your sake, and my spirits are diminishing.
If you forget my love, Heaven will be wroth with you!
I remember one of the ancient women, "Mêng-chêng," went to seek her husband.
Everyone has heard of it.
How in tears, fatigue and hardship, she struggled over a thousand *li* to the great wall, to take warm clothing to her husband.
Her heart was like *mine!*
But persons' hearts *now* are not the same as the ancients'.
If *I* went to seek *my* husband, I am afraid people would only ridicule me.

Eleventh Month.

The eleventh month has arrived.
The dropping water becomes ice, and the snow flakes whirl about in the air.
I light a hand-stove and embrace it instead of my husband.
This melancholy is grievous for a young woman.
Who could be so affectionate to me as my husband?
The hand-stove is warm, but not so warm or affectionate as *he.*
Who is that knocking at the door?
It is the letter-carrier; he calls out "Madam!"
And I receive in my two hands a welcome letter.
I break open the seal and look.
In it is written: "Worthy wife, do not be unhappy, take care of your domestic affairs, I shall certainly arrive at the end of the year."

Twelfth Month.

The twelfth month is here.
Last night the lamp-wick formed a beautiful lotus flower.
The magpies chattered; I think I *must* soon see him again.
There is an uproar outside the door.

My husband has returned home !

He quits the saddle ! He alights from the horse !

He *is* a good one ! He did *not* break his word !

He is a *real*, genuine husband !

The broken mirror is again united.

This is not merely my husband returned to his home from afar,

It is evidently the sharp sword of the "Dragon of the fountain" to cut off my love-sickness.

I am too delighted to speak !

Within the golden embroidered curtains we mutually relate our hearts' thoughts.

Well may the common saying be,

"There is more pleasure in one returning from afar, than in a new marriage."

CROSSING THE FERRY, OR PICKABACK LOVE.[1]

YOUNG Wang sat idly by a stream,
His bare feet dangling in the water;
Indulging in a mid-day dream
Of love,—and neighbour Li's fair daughter.

[1] It would seem as if this song had its origin in a very old tale of a young scholar named Hsü, who was out walking one day when he came to a stream; perceiving the water to be shallow, and desiring to cross it, he sat down and began to remove his shoes and stockings. While thus employed a beautiful girl suddenly appeared before him, and seemed by her manner to wish to cross the stream, but was disappointed because there was no means of doing so.

Hsü perceiving this, said to her, "Fair girl, do you wish to pass over the stream?" The girl smiled. Hsü again said, "What a pity to soil your shoes and stockings by wading through it. Let my back be used as a ferry-boat." The girl blushing and confused got on his back. When in the centre of the stream, Hsü saw her beauty reflected in the stream and sang:—

"The beautiful girl crosses the silver river;
The red petticoat covers the green waves."

Scarcely had he concluded the couplet before he reached the opposite

Why was he staying?
What was he saying?
He inwardly murmured, "She *must* come this way.
"Can I, or can't I,
"Shall I, or sha'n't I,
"Pluck up a spirit and tell her to-day?"

What made his heart thus wildly beat,
And caused his eyes to beam so brightly;
From the cool stream withdraw his feet,
And spring up from the ground so lightly?

There stood at the head of the willow-fringed road,
Like a beautiful picture enshrined in its frame,
A girl whose fair features with exercise glowed,—
She paused for a moment—then onward she came.

bank; the girl then got off his back, and completed a stanza with the following two lines:—

"Only for these two sentences of poetry
You shall be deprived of first-class scholarship in examination."

The girl immediately disappeared, and Hsü never attained to the coveted scholarship, although eventually he rose to very high rank. This he ascribed to the influence of the fairy he had assisted to cross the river, but whom he had offended by his impertinence.

Wang watched her draw near,
But of course couldn't hear,
For her step was so light it emitted no sound ;
But—time-honoured fashion—
She left an impression,
Of her " three inch gold lilies "[1] each time in the ground.

Her face she averted,
Looking quite disconcerted,
At seeing young Wang stand alone on the brink ;
'Twas no use to dissemble,
She was all of a tremble,
And she felt—as the saying is—ready to sink.

There was the stream, but the stream it was wide,
How could she get o'er to the opposite side ?
She had miles yet to travel, and must hurry on,
But the boat and the ferryman both were clean gone.

To know what to do, she was quite at a loss—
If *he* hadn't been there she'd have waded across ;
A paddle in water would have been quite a treat,
But she wouldn't let *him* see her stockingless feet.

[1] Poetical name for the small feet of Chinese women.

The longer she thought, the more flurried she grew,
And worked herself into a regular stew.
For little she knew 'twas a well-arranged plan
Of young Wang's, who that morning had well bribed the man.

He stood looking on quite enjoying the fun,
Inwardly chuckling at what he had done:
Cursing the man and the boat that were gone—
Calming the girl as the time still wore on.

Thinking her patience by this time exhausted,
He smiled, and the young girl politely accosted.
"I see your dilemma,—but why all this worry?
There's my back at your service in crossing the ferry.

"Jump up on my back,
Cling tight to my neck,
I'll engage to convey you across in a crack."
He gently suggested,
She mildly protested,
But at length the point she no longer contested.

Blushing carnation, her courage she plucked up;
With trembling hands she her petticoat tucked up.
She had never before been so awkwardly placed—
Just fancy her sitting astride a man's waist!
And her "three inch gold lilies"—perforce, he held them,
His hands doing duty as stirrups, *pro tem.*
"Put your arms round my neck,—there, now you're all right,
But whatever you do, be sure you hold tight.

"The water, you see,
Won't come up to my knee,
But the tighter you cling—the safer you'll be."
She bowed to her fate,
As he, proud and elate,
Stepped into the water with his precious freight.

"Doesn't the sun shine out dazzlingly bright!
Are not the gold-bordered clouds snowy white!
Isn't the sky a magnificent blue!
Are not the wild flowers brilliant in hue!
Is not their fragrance deliciously sweet!
Doesn't the water feel cool to the feet!
Where's there a stream runs so limpid and clear!
Doesn't its ripple sound soft to the ear!

How sweet the birds warble from every bough !
How refreshing the gentle breeze comes to the brow !
Don't the trees, and the fields, and the meadows look green !
Could a painter portray such an exquisite scene ?
Can all this be real ? Am I sure it's no dream ?
Is she in my arms ? Are we crossing the stream ?
No, not in my arms—but she is on my back,
For do not I feel her arms clasping my neck ?"

But he altered the tune
Remarkably soon ;
His rhapsody ceased as he swayed to and fro :
He cursed most infernally,—
(Of course 'twas internally,)
Ai-ya ! there's a tittlebat nibbling my toe !

Ai-yo and ai-ya !
Such a little *fracas*,
He couldn't of course be expected to tell,
But said : "Isn't it odd
On a stone I have trod,"
Which answered the purpose remarkably well.

The bright sun seemed brighter,
The blue sky still bluer ;
The fleecy clouds whiter,
The pure air more pure ;
The clear stream still clearer ;
He drew nearer and nearer
The opposite bank—but suddenly stopped ;
In his head an idea had suddenly popped.

Why was he staying?
What was he saying?
He inwardly murmured, "I'll tell her to-day :
I do love her, don't I?
And always will, won't I?
But the job is, I feel at a loss what to say."

"Why do you pause?
What is the cause
Of your fixing your eyes on the stream so intently?
What is it you see?
Pray tell it to me,"
Cried she,—at the same time nudging him gently.

"I was told by a fairy one night in a dream,
That my fate would be sealed at mid-day in this stream ;

That she loved me—and if I came hither and sought her,
She would show me her face in the clear running water,
And from thence speak her love,—the stream too would
show,
If I in return loved her really or no.
It is noon, but alas! the fair face I expected,
In the clear running water I see not reflected.

"I look in the water and there I behold,
The clear stream flow over the bright yellow sand,—
Like pure molten silver o'er glittering gold,
And mirrors the forms of us both as we stand.
I can see a lithe form so symmetrically shaped,
That I almost imagine it cannot be real;
The garments in which this fair being is draped
Enhance but the charms they are meant to conceal.

"But I see not a trace
Of the beautiful face
That appeared in my dream and bade me come here,
Look over my shoulder,
See if *you* can behold her.
Perhaps if *you* look her sweet face would appear."

She little suspecting
The part she was acting,
Looked eagerly into the depths of the stream;
But she'd like to have died,
When he suddenly cried,
"*There's the face of the fairy I saw in my dream!*"

Yes, down in the water his eyes and hers met,
Neither spoke—for a word would have broken the spell;
It was but a glance, quick as lightning—but yet
Each knew what the other felt equally well.

In confusion—her blushing face sank on his shoulder,
Her eyes had perhaps told him more than they ought,
And there in the cool running water he told her
All the love that he felt—and they both of them thought—

"Doesn't the sun shine out dazzlingly bright!
Are not the gold-bordered clouds snowy bright!
Isn't the sky a magnificent blue!
Are not the wild flowers brilliant in hue!
Isn't their fragrance deliciously sweet!
What place could be better for lovers to meet!

Where's there a stream runs so limpid and clear!
Doesn't its ripple sound soft to the ear!
How sweet the birds warble from every bough!
How refreshing the gentle breeze plays on the brow!
Don't the trees, and the fields, and the meadows look green!
Could a painter portray such an exquisite scene!
Isn't it pleasant to stay thus and dream!
Isn't it sweet to make love in a stream!"

JÊN KUEI'S RETURN,

A PLAY.

(*From the Chinese.*)

Dramatis Personæ.

WANG CHAN	*A Taoist Priest.*
JÊN KUEI	*A Soldier of Fortune.*
TING SHAN	*Son of Jên Kuei.*
LIU YING FANG	*Wife of Jên Kuei.*
TIGER.	

Time of Representation . . . . . One hour.

Chinese costume of the Tang dynasty.

SCENE I.

Mountain Scenery. Enter an old man from ravine at the back. Old man supporting himself with a staff advances to front of stage and recites:

INTRODUCTION.

THE ground 's bedecked with opening yellow flowers;
And fairies issue forth from grots and bowers.

Within these mountain fastnesses I've stayed
Since boyhood's earliest hours, and ever made
The skilful arts my study and delight,
My task by day, my very dreams at night.
All that my Mentor knew of magic lore,
His own lips taught me—still I longed for more ;
My leisure hours within my cave I passed,
Weaving new spells—each subtler than the last,
And daily—hourly, in the classics pored,
Till each I knew by rote, ay, word for word ;
Compounding potions—mixing fairy pills,
A panacea for all earthly ills.

I am Wang-chan, a poor old Taoist priest, but for my pupil Ting-shan's sake, who is exposed to danger at 'Hung-'ho-wan, I now go forth armed with the mandate of Yü-ti to succour him. So I'll take my tiger and depart to save him. (*Sings.*)

SONG.

The dappled stag in the front of the hill,
And the loping wolf behind,
Contracted a friendship, for good or for ill,
Each to each to be equally kind.

When the wolf was in danger, the brave dappled stag
Dashed gallantly off to his aid;
He thought but of friendship, nor once did he flag
Till his old friend the wolf he had saved.

One day the poor stag in his turn came to grief:
Did the wolf save his dappled friend then?
No; true to his blood, like a vile midnight thief,
The wolf skulked away to his den.

Now that I have done with all worldly affairs, why am I here? 'Tis on account of my pupil Hsüeh-ting-shan.

(*Pointing southward and blowing: immediately a tiger appears before him. Addressing the tiger.*)

Tiger, stand before me and listen, for I have some instructions to give you. You take my pupil to the mountains so that he may be saved, and I will reward you with a fat sheep. But should he come to harm, you shall be sent to the depths of the mountains never to return. (*Exit tiger.*) I shall not remain here long, but shortly go myself to 'Hung-'ho-wan. (*Exit, R.*)

SCENE II.

(*An old brick or pottery kiln with a low wall running round it; opening in the wall leading to the door of the kiln. Liu-ying-fang enters from kiln.*)

LIU.

My husband has gone to Chang-An[1] and has never yet returned. I am Liu-ying-fang, the wife of Hsueh, but he has now been gone eighteen years as a soldier to the capital, and I have never received any tidings of him.

I and my son live in this old kiln and have not wherewith to keep us. The weather is delightfully pleasant to-day, so I'll bid my son go forth and spear a few fish or shoot a goose at 'Ho-wan. (*Calls.*) Ting-shan, my son, where are you? (*Retires to the side.—Ting-shan enters from the kiln.*)

TING.

My father has gone to Chang-An; he has now been away these eighteen years. This old kiln is my birthplace, and my name is Ting-shan. (*To his mother*) My dear mother, good morning (*kneeling*).

[1] In Shansi; at that time the capital of the Empire.

LIU.

My child, never mind ceremony, but sit down.

TING.

I will sit, since you bid me. (*Sits.*) Mother, you called me, what have you to tell me?

LIU.

See, to-day the weather is clear and fine. Go, my son, to 'Ho-wan, and spear some fish or shoot a goose that we may satisfy our hunger. My son, are you willing to go?

TING.

Oh, yes! I will go with the utmost willingness.

LIU.

Since you are willing to go, first sit down by the old kiln and listen to what I have to tell you. (*Sings.*)

SONG.

Be seated, my son, near this ruined kiln door,
And patiently listen to what I now say;
Your father, alas, when we wed was so poor,
That we had not wherewith to keep hunger away.

So he started one day for the town of Chang-An,
As a soldier, the foes of his country to fight;
When he left, you were not then born, my Ting-shan.
His own son, alas, never gladdened his sight.

Since he first left his home 'tis now eighteen long years,
How sadly and slowly those weary years passed:
Each day saw me here half blinded with tears,
Watching, hoping, and praying he might come at last.

My son, you are now my sole solace and pride,
In all this wide world who have I but you?
I droop if one hour you're away from my side:
Should you leave me like him, oh, what should I do

On you, too, the time-honoured duty now falls
The mother who reared you in comfort to keep;
To tend to my grave when I leave these four walls,
For the narrower home where our ancestors sleep.

Go, my son, to the river with bow and with spear,
On wild goose and carp your skill there display;
I shall wait your return with anxiety here,
Each moment an hour while my Ting-shan 's away.

(*Lad sings.*)

Mother dear, pray where is the need,
To me these instructions to give?
You know very well I shall heed
Every word you have said while I live.

I'll quickly return, never fear,
And when I come back you shall see
Geese and carp—perhaps a fat deer—
But now, mother, listen to me.

I was down by the river one day,
And an arrow had deftly let fly
At a goose slowly skimming away
Athwart the blue mid-summer sky;

When an old man, his hair white as snow,
His features bewrinkled by age,
Came up with step stately and slow,
Like a hermit or some ancient sage.

My features he carefully scanned,
And my horoscope rapidly cast:
He could tell by the lines in my hand,
The future, the present, the past.

What you've just related to me,
In nearly the same words he told;
He said I a comfort should be
To you, when grown feeble and old.

That in time I might hope to attain
To rank, honour, riches and fame;
That my deeds for me one day should gain
An immortal—an undying name.

There—give me my coat, mother dear,
My hat too and gaiters I'll don,
My quiver, my bow, and my spear—
Good bye, mother—Now for 'Ho-wan. (*Exit, R.*)

(*While singing the last verse the lad has been putting on his coat, hat, &c. and taking his weapons*).

(*Liu, looking after him.*) Dear lad! there he goes, as light-hearted and happy as possible. I don't know how it is, but whenever he quits my sight, I always feel as if I had lost him—as if he had gone for ever, or that something *must* happen to him; my mind is racked with a thousand fears for his safety, and I am wretched till he returns. (*Goes into hovel. Scene closes.*)

SCENE III.

Rural scene near the banks of a river.

(*Enter old man, L., with tiger. Sings.*)

Ho! tiger, fly
To 'Hung-'ho-wan!
For danger 's nigh
The boy Ting-shan!
Save his young life
From treacherous dart,—
From murderous knife,—
From all.—Depart!

The river is near,
With its water so clear,
Noiselessly wending its way to the west;
My pupil Ting-shan
Must pass by anon,
So I'll sit me awhile on its margin and rest.

(*Retires up R. C. Enter Ting-shan, L. Boy sings.*)

I've just left my mother at our old cottage door,
And trudged all this way over field, brake and moor ;
In hopes near 'Ho-wan a wild goose to kill,
Or in its broad waters on carp try my skill.

In the world there are thousands of lads poor as me,
But, excepting myself, never once did I see
A fatherless lad. Oh ! what have I done ?
I know not my father, he knows not his son !

I wear a straw hat and a blue gaberdine,—
Though made of coarse stuff it is spotless and clean ;
I grasp with my left hand my bow—ready strung,
Which over my shoulder is carelessly slung.

In my right hand I hold my fish-basket and spear,
Thus lightly equipped I could outrun a deer :—
Here I am at the river, and now then to see,
Bow or spear, which is first of some service to be.

Here they come,—the bright sky is obscured by wild geese,
How they cackle,—the cackle of one shall soon cease :
Quick ere they pass by—ah, that arrow went true,—
He's struck,—now another, and down topple two.

I'll now try my spear on the carp and the bream,
That glitter and play in the clear running stream ;—
But hark ! the gay jingle of bells strikes my ear,
A horseman approaches, I'll watch who comes here.

(*Enter Jên, R. During the following verses he is supposed to be galloping over a large tract of country, the verses being partly descriptive of the ride. Sings.*)

Once more on the road am I recklessly riding,
But this time, alas ! 'tis in ignoble flight ;
I slacken the pace of the steed I'm bestriding,
I turn back my head, but Chang-An's not in sight.

I see not the prince as a soldier I fought for,
The palace—the courtiers on each side the throne :
The honour and rank I so eagerly sought for,
For eighteen long years in a moment have flown.

Of my hardly earned laurels they cannot deprive me,
They may strip me of wealth—they may blacken my name ;
But, Corea, thy hard-foughten fields will survive me,
Inscribed ages hence on the bright scroll of fame.

Base traitors ! to further their own ends conspiring ;
Weak monarch ! to heed their perfidious lies,—
That I was a plotter so madly aspiring
As to raise to the throne my presumptuous eyes.

Thrust forth from the court—with contumely degraded,
Condemned to the foul executioner's knife :—
That, at least, I was spared, by a trusty friend aided,
I, who'd faced death so oft, turned and fled for my life.

On ! on ! my brave steed ! whip and spur I am plying!
Ah ! yonder the barrier of Chin-tou I see :
How green the fields look as I onward am flying,
But my heart 's pre-engaged—they have no charm for me.

On ! city and village I pass by unheeding,
At Shih-li-pu town I rein up and alight :
Steed and rider both rest and refreshment are needing,
Ere long we again must continue our flight.

Again, on, past hamlet and homestead we're fleeting,
Till Pu-chou's high ramparts loom up to my view ;
On ! heedless alike of scowl, curse, or kind greeting,
I enter the city and madly dash through.

On ! there are the four iron bulls near the river,
Grim guards of the stream which flows smoothly on ;
And yonder, accoutred with bow, spear and quiver,
Stands a youth on the banks of the broad 'Hung-'ho-wan.

He now draws his bow on the geese o'erhead sailing :
See ! the arrow unerring transfixes one's breast !
Now another one falls !—his aim is unfailing ;
This lad as an archer might vie with the best.

Now he takes up his spear which he skilfully uses,
On the bright glittering carp—in a trice he's speared three :—
He's born to success, let him do what he chooses.
Whence came he? Who is he? or what can he be?

He surpasses e'en me,—do I live to avow it ?
Should the "dragon eye" see him 'twould fill him with joy :
He would soon replace me,—shall I calmly allow it?
I cannot, I'll halt and e'en speak to the boy. (*Dismounts.*)

JÊN.

Ho ! youngster ! Good day to you !

BOY.

Good day, sir.

JÊN.

What are you doing here?

BOY.

I am shooting wild geese.

JÊN.

How many geese could you bring down with one arrow?

BOY.

With one arrow I can bring down but one goose.

JÊN.

Why that 's nothing extraordinary, I can bring down two at one shot.

BOY.

Oh ! I can't believe that.

JÊN.

I'll do it before your eyes.

BOY.

If you can bring down two geese with one arrow, I should be very glad if you would teach me how to do it.

JÊN.

Well, if you don't believe, boy, give me your bow and arrow, and you shall see.

BOY.

Here they are.

JÊN.

Thanks. (*Sings. Aside.*)

He falls in the snare
I have spread.
Now, youngster, beware
For a thread,—
Just the string of a bow,
I have but to let go
And his life, like this arrow, as swiftly is sped.

BOY.

Now, please to look out,
Mind what you're about,
The geese are not here, but behind overhead.

(*During the foregoing Jên has unthinkingly been pointing the arrow in the direction of the Boy.*)

JÊN.

He suspects me, 'tis clear,
And the ruse
I planned, is I fear
Of no use;
However, I'll try,
Either he falls, or I,
One life must be lost,—I can prophesy whose.
There 's no one in view,
To watch what I do,—
Look up boy, and see how I bring down my goose!

(*Boy looks up unsuspectingly, Jên shoots him—Boy falls. Tiger springs on boy and bears him off, L. Jên sings during above business.*)

JÊN.

He sinks to the ground,
Life is o'er.—
With wild angry bound
And loud roar,
A tiger appears,
Like lightning he clears
The space between him and the lad smeared with gore,

On the youngster he springs,
And, as gifted with wings,
He speeds with his prey over hill, dale and moor.

JÊN.

I could swear that I put an arrow through the boy, but who would have thought that a tiger would have come at the same moment and carried him off? Perhaps it 's better it is so. However, I may as well go while there is no one about, it might not be convenient should anyone see me here. Well, well, I might have spared the lad, but it would never do for a soldier like me to allow another to live who was so much my superior in the very weapons I excel in. (*Retires off, R., leading his horse.*)

SCENE IV.

Ruined kiln.

(*Boy's mother anxiously looking off, R. Sings.*)

Why comes he not? I strain my weary eyes,—
I shade them from the sun's fierce slanting ray;
I see the green fields, hills and bright blue skies,
But, ah, not him, more bright to me than they.

Why comes he not? What makes him linger so?
He left this morning at the early dawn;
I marked the trees their shadows westward throw,
Now, flickering on the sward, they're eastward drawn.

Why comes he not? Without him all is gloom,
The bright sun darkness, flowers and fields a wild;
The gay world but a gaudy living tomb,
What else, were I bereft of him—my child?

Why comes he not? The gentle summer breeze,
Seems pityingly to murmur by my cot;
The myriad tongue-like leaves on those old trees,
Fanned gently by it, wail, "Why comes he not?"

Why comes he not? I do not see him yet,
I'll sit and wait here by the cottage door;
He *must* come soon—my weak fears I'll forget—
I can't!—Oh, God! my son, he'll come no more!

(*Sits at the door of kiln rocking herself to and fro. Fên enters, L., takes front of the stage and sings.*)

His mother at home will expect him in vain,
In this world she will never more see him again;

My arrow went home in the young fellow's breast,
And the tiger's sharp fangs in a trice did the rest.
She may watch for his coming and anxiously wait,
But her hair will wax grey ere she knows of his fate.

Ah! yonder 's an old kiln, and there at the door
Sits a matron—I surely have seen her before;
I see not her face, but her form seems to be,
Spite of rags, somewhat strangely familiar to me;
It resembles my wife's, whom I left long ago,—
I'll dismount,—but one glance at her face will soon show.

(*Dismounts and approaches the woman.*)

JÊN.

Madam, allow me to offer you my salutations.

LIU.

Thank you! You will excuse me returning your courtesies.—You are a soldier I presume, and have lost your way?

JÊN.

No, I am a courier, bearer of a letter to a person,—perhaps you know her?

LIU.

If it's any person of note I shall probably know her.

JÊN.

Well I should say the person *is* rather noted.

LIU.

Who may it be then?

JÊN.

The daughter of Liu-wan-wai, the wife of Hsüeh-jên-kue, and her name is Liu-ying-fang.

LIU.

Are you related to her?

JÊN.

No, I am no relation of hers.

LIU.

Belike you are old friends, then?

JÊN.

No, nor a friend, either.

LIU.

If you are neither relation nor friend, you can have no occasion to inquire for her.

JÊN.

Madam, you must know that her husband Hsüeh and I served as soldiers together, and fought under the same banner. I am now proceeding homewards, and as my road led past his village I am taking a letter for him.

LIU (*hastily*).

What do you say—that you have brought a letter and want to see her?

JÊN.

Just so.

LIU.

Will you wait a moment then, sir?

JÊN.

At your pleasure, madam.

LIU (*aside.*)

This is strange. My husband has been gone these eighteen years, and in all that time I have never received a

line from him, but to-day this gentleman brings one, and I cannot avoid going to take it from him. But stay. My clothes are all in tatters, and I fear he will only ridicule me. I have it! (*To him.*) Sir, Mrs. Liu is from home; leave the letter with me; I'll see that she gets it safely.

JÊN.

There you are wrong, madam: the old adage has it: "The letter sent a thousand miles is in danger of not reaching its destination, but to deliver one to the wrong person, after coming ten thousand miles, is sheer waste of time." I have brought the letter to-day, and I must positively see the proper person.

LIU.

And if you don't see her?

JÊN.

If I don't, I shall take the letter back. (*Hastily leading the horse off.*)

LIU.

Stop, sir, stop.

JÊN (*Pausing*).

Do you think she's at home?

LIU.

(*Aside.*) What shall I do? If I tell the truth, I fear the gentleman will ridicule me; if I don't tell the truth, he will take the letter back, and if he does, how do I know I may not have to wait another eighteen years for my husband? Ah, Hsüeh-lang! Hsüeh-lang! when you left I had no good clothing, and shall I fear ridicule now?—I'll speak to him. (*To Jên.*) Sir, you insist on seeing the proper person?

JÊN.

To be sure.

LIU.

Look yonder.

JÊN.

There is no one.

LIU.

Look nearer then.

JÊN.

Then *you* must be Mrs. Liu.

LIU.

Yes, sir, I am Jên-kuei's wife.

JÊN.

Indeed! Just now I did not recognise you. Allow me to make my bow to you.

LIU.

You did so just now.

JÊN.

Well, it's nothing strange for a person to be polite, is it?

LIU.

Never mind politeness, give it me.

JÊN.

Give you what?

LIU.

Give me my letter.

JÊN.

Wait a moment, madam, while I take the letter from the saddle. (*Aside.*) Who'd have thought it, that to-day I have returned and thus met my wife Liu? I *must* go up to her, and then I shall be recognised. Wait a bit, though. Now I think of it, I have been away from home eighteen years,

and I don't know whether she has remained faithful or not. As there is no one about just now, I'll try a bit of flirtation with her.—I have it. (*To her.*) Alas! alas! madam!

LIU.

What are you so agitated about?

JÊN.

Some time or other I could not have taken care of the letter, and it is lost.

LIU.

Oh! you cannot have lost it. What right have you to lose my husband's letter?

JÊN.

Madam, although I have lost the letter, I have another very important affair to tell you of.

LIU.

What important affair?

JÊN.

From old times the common saying has been "Announce joy but don't announce sorrow."

LIU.

What mean you by "Announce joy but not sorrow?"

JÊN.

This affair I think I can't help speaking of. My old comrade Hsüeh one day caught a severe cold, from which he never recovered.

LIU.

What do you say? Dead? (*Wrings her hands and weeps.*) Oh, Hsüeh-lang! Hsüeh-lang! You have been away now eighteen years, and I have never heard a word from you. Now, to-day I have news, but it is of your death!

JÊN.

(*Laughing.*) Ha! ha! ha! You need not cry any more,—from old times it has always been a common saying "If the dead wore red[1] there are others that wear green." One time I lent my comrade Hsüeh fifty taels; when he was dying, he called me to his bedside, and said, "Old brother! old brother! In this world I shall never be able

[1] Equivalent to our "There are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it."

to repay the fifty taels you lent me, but I have a wife at home named Liu. Take her instead of the fifty taels,—I sell her to you." With that he closed his eyes and died. You are now my wife. Come! come! come! come! Off to my house!

LIU

(*Affrighted.*) Is this the truth?

JÊN.

Do you think I'd tell a lie?

LIU.

Villain! Thief!

JÊN.

Ah! do you abuse me?

LIU (*sings*).

Audacious wretch, you'd best beware!
The tale you tell,
I know full well
Is nought but lies. Is't thus you dare
To venture here to deceive me?

Should I but call,
From far and near,
The neighbours all
Would soon appear ;
You'd find it hard to 'scape from here,
So, villain, impostor, leave me !

JÊN.

Come, let 's go in ! Wife, hold your tongue !
I've now come home,
No more to roam.

LIU.

I'm not your wife.—I'm not Liu-fang.
She 's in the cottage near you.

JÊN.

What 's that you say ?
In there, is she ?

LIU.

Yes, yes, don't stay !
Go in and see.—

He 's safely bolted in by me.
Good sir, I now don't fear you.

(*During the last few lines Jên has gone into the cottage and has been bolted in by Liu.*)

JÊN.

(*From within.*) Why have you fastened the door?

LIU.

If I had not fastened you in, our positions would have been reversed; you came here to capture a woman, but she has captured you.

JÊN.

Open the door, Liu, I am your husband come back.

LIU.

You talk at random. (*Sings.*)

A moment ago you 're a soldier you say,
And bring me a letter from one long away;
Now, you 're my husband returned home once more,—
But that you must prove ere I unbar the door.

If you really are he, tell me some of the past;
Where first did we meet? When saw you me last?
At that time what were you? Why did you go?
What said we at parting? Every word let me know.

Should you think to deceive me, or tell but one lie,
You cannot escape, in that cottage you die.
But if you 're my husband returned from afar,
First prove it, and gladly the door I'll unbar.

JÊN.

(*Within.*) Open the door first and then I'll tell you.

LIU.

When you prove yourself my husband, then I'll open the door.

JÊN.

Oh, wife!

LIU.

You *will* call me wife?

JÊN.

Yes, I will.

LIU.

You like to call me wife?

JÊN.

Yes, what else would you have me call you?

LIU.

When you were outside just now what did you call me?

JÊN.

I called you "madam."

LIU.

Then address me as you did before.

JÊN.

Address you as I did before?

LIU.

Just so.

JÊN.

Oh, wife! wife! wife! wife! Madam! (*Sings.*)

Oh, let my memory retrace
Time's noiseless track !
And bring each old familiar place,
My boyhood's home,—each well-known face—
In fancy back.

A lad and maiden first I see.
The maiden's you.
"I love you," gently murmurs he,
"Will you be mine? Do you love me?"
She says, "I do."

I see a newly wedded pair,
With hope elate ;
They're young ; he's brave and she is fair,
Though poor they're not depressed by care.
They laugh at fate.

Time passes and I now behold
The erewhile youth
A man,—grown prematurely old,
By toil and suffering, heat and cold.
Speak I the truth?

Now turn we to another page ;
Stately and slow,
I see a venerable sage
Approach—his form bowed down by age,
His hair like snow.

He bade the man forthwith repair
Towards Chang-An.
"Brave men like you are wanted there ;
Why linger here? Your arms prepare ;
And armour don."

Next comes the final parting scene,
With flagging feet,
He goes,—who knows what lies between—
How many years may intervene
Ere those two meet?

He left,—(my story 's nearly done)
At twenty-three :
Since then he's fame and honour won,
He now returns at forty-one—
And I am he.

LIU.

(*Aside.*) While he has been talking there, I have been reckoning here. Yes, he is my husband who has been away these eighteen years; I'll open the door. (*Opens the door partly, then suddenly closes it again.*)

JÊN.

Why do you shut the door again after having half opened it?

LIU.

I closed it again for I bethought myself that although your language agrees, your appearance is entirely different.

JÊN.

In what do I differ?

LIU.

My husband was quite a lad, and you are like a brigand, with that beard all round your mouth.

JÊN.

Heigho! After an absence of eighteen years when husband and wife meet, this beard must needs come between and cause trouble. Open the door and look at me.

LIU.

(*Aside.*) Yes, it must be really he, so I'll open the door. (*Opens door, they embrace, etc. To him.*) Hsüeh, what office have you been holding these last eighteen years?

JÊN.

(*Aside.*) Well, I return after eighteen years' absence, and she does not ask me one question concerning the hardships I have suffered, but her first inquiry is "What office have you been holding?" (*To her.*) Wife, what office did I hold formerly, before I left?

LIU.

Messman.

JÊN.

Now I'm higher in rank.

LIU.

What are you promoted to?

JÊN.

I'm caterer.

LIU.

What does he have to do?

JÊN.

Oh, chops up forage and feeds the horses.

LIU.

And a messman?

JÊN.

He cooks the rice.

LIU.

How dreadful! (*Cries.*)

JÊN.

(*Aside.*) Just look at this woman; I've scarcely spoken a word and there she is crying. (*To her.*) Wife, I am a prince, now.

LIU.

A prince! I can scarcely believe that; what proof have you of it?

JÊN.

I've my seal.

LIU.

A seal; let me look at it.

JÊN.

(*Produces seal.*) There, what do you think of that?

LIU.

Oh, dear! You come back after eighteen years only to vex me.

JÊN.

How do you make that out?

LIU.

Where did you get that old bit of copper from?

JÊN.

Copper! It 's massive gold. It 's the seal of a duke.

LIU.

Really and truly?

JÊN.

Really and truly.

LIU.

It must be valuable then; but we are talking and have not yet had anything to eat. Come in and sit down while I prepare something for you. (*Exeunt into cottage.*)

SCENE V.

Interior of cottage scantily furnished, Jên and Liu discovered.

LIU.

There! You stay here for a few minutes till I return and make the place look a little more comfortable. (*Goes into an inner room.*)

JÊN.

Bah! these women are always bustling about their household affairs, "making you comfortable" they call it; I think it the reverse, with their perpetual scrubbing and sweeping. Hollo! What's this? (*Sees a man's shoes on the floor.*) This is devilish strange! I couldn't have left my shoes here eighteen years ago, for I had but one pair and those were on my feet; besides they would not have remained here all that time. These have been recently worn,—they are too small for me, besides. Where could they have come from? Perdition! She must have a paramour! I'll see into this.

(*Re-enter Liu. Jên seizes her, and is about to kill her.*)

LIU.

Good Heavens! What have I done that you should want to kill me?

JÊN.

Say, these shoes, where do they come from?

LIU.

These shoes—these shoes—

JÊN.

Ah! you hesitate, do you? You know the owner of them perhaps?

LIU.

Oh! yes, I know him well.

JÊN.

Base woman! She does not attempt to disguise it. He is often here, I suppose?

LIU.

Yes, for I am miserable when he 's out of my sight. I've been wretched all day waiting for him.

JÊN.

You seem very anxious about him. I should not be surprised if you were to tell me plainly next that he had slept with you. (*Sneeringly.*)

LIU.

Yes, many a night has he slept in my arms, with his dear head pillowed on my bosom.

JÊN.

(*Mimicking her.*) Oh! with "his dear head pillowed on your bosom," eh? She 'll drive me distracted! (*Walking about in a rage.*)

LIU.

(*Aside.*) Just look at the man how angry he 's getting. Wait till I tantalise him a bit. (*To him.*) You have been away now these eighteen years, and for seventeen years he has never been separated from me.

JÊN.

I am dying with rage!

LIU.

You ask who the person is who wears those shoes.—I'll

tell you. He is our son. At the time you left I was pregnant, and you had often said should I ever become a mother, if our child was a boy, he should be named Ting-shan, if a girl, she should be called "Golden Lily." These are Ting-shan's shoes.

JÊN.

My son! Where is he? Where is he gone?

LIU.

He went to the river to shoot some wild geese.

JÊN.

To the river to shoot— (*Aside.*) Great Heavens, should it be he! (*Hastily.*) Tell me, what did he wear?

LIU.

Why, how frightened you look! He wore a blue gaberdine, a ——

JÊN.

Oh! ruin! He 's destroyed! (*Falls senseless.*)

(SCENE CLOSES.)

THE GREAT WATER-MELON.[1]

THE complexion of Miss could compare
With the snowflake in whiteness:
She'd cherry lips,—long silken hair,
And her eyes' dazzling brightness
Set fire to the heart of an amorous youth,
So he boldly determined to tell her the truth.

But as nothing—not even love-making—
Can succeed in this life without taking
Some appropriate present to show one has thought
Of those whom one visits, he went out and bought
A box of toilet powder,
Such as ladies love to use;
Two sprays of floss embroidered flowers,
So that she could pick and choose:

[1] This is simply rubbish, but shows the similarity between Chinese "comic" songs and some our own.

A score of fine crabs
"All alive" he had bought her :
Half-a-catty of shrimps
Just fresh from the water.
These he carefully took in his hands ; but the rest—
A large water-melon—he tucked in his breast.

He was just going out of the door
When he tripped, and down he came sprawling ;
He sat up, and there on the floor
Were the shrimps and crabs, skipping and crawling !

The powder all scattered !
Flowers crumpled and battered !
Off crawled the crabs overjoyed to be free !
Away hopped the shrimps in the height of their glee !
Flop ! the large water-melon he had was all smashed,
And now closely resembled a poultice well mashed ;
And, sad to relate, the young man roundly swore
"Ai-ya ! I won't go to make love any more !"

SNOW IN SUMMER.[1]

HER eyes flashed fire,—her bosom heaved and swelled ;
The hot red blood face, neck, and brow suffused,
As she with scorn indignantly repelled
The awful charge of which she stood accused.

" 'Tis a base lie,—a plot,—a vile conspiracy !
I'm but a girl,—some say my face is fair ;
Look,—you, my judges ! tell me can you see
Aught that betokens *murder* written there ?

" Think you these hands could wield a murderer's knife ?
(Are they not baby-like ? so soft and small ?)
Could they give poison,—take away a life ?
A *mother's* too ! oh ! that were worse than all !

[1] *Tou-o* was a girl who had been falsely accused of poisoning her mother-in-law. She was sentenced to death, conveyed to the execution ground, and awaiting the blow of the headsman, when Heaven interposed in her behalf; for, it being then the height of mid-summer, a heavy fall of snow came on. This was looked upon as a sign of her innocence and she was at once released.

"You that have daughters, pause ere you condemn ;
Fancy them torn from home,—from all held dear !
Young, beautiful—oh ! try to picture *them*,
Guiltless of crime, but—like *me* standing here.

"I'm innocent ! your sentence is unjust !
'Tis legal murder, and my death will lie
At each one's door !—But no, in One I trust ;
Heaven will not let a guiltless woman die !"

Pale and resigned she knelt upon the ground,
Her tearless eyes in prayer to heaven upraised ;
Her ruthless butchers eagerly thronged round,
On her fair form with admiration gazed.

With bended head beneath that glaring sun
She calmly waited for the fatal blow ;
The sword is raised—when, strange phenomenon !
Mid-summer's heat is changed to winter's snow.

Judge, guards, and executioner stood aghast,
While every head in reverence was bent
Before the girl,—the snow flakes falling fast
Mutely proclaiming she was innocent.

CHANG-LIANG'S FLUTE, OR HOME-SICKNESS.

'Twas night—the tired soldiers were peacefully sleeping,
The low hum of voices was hushed in repose;
The sentries in silence a strict watch were keeping,
'Gainst surprise, or a sudden attack of their foes.

When a low mellow note on the night air came stealing,
So soothingly over the senses it fell—
So touchingly sweet—so soft and appealing,
Like the musical tones of an aërial bell.[1]

Now rising, now falling—now fuller and clearer—
Now liquidly soft—now a low wailing cry—
Now the cadences seem floating nearer and nearer—
Now dying away in a whispering sigh.

[1] *Fêng-ling*, wind bells, or more commonly called *Tieh-ma*, iron horses, though in reality there is a great difference between the two, *Fêng-ling* being bell-shaped, while the *Tieh-ma* are flat and of various shapes, but always having a piece cut out from the centre, without which they would not sound. These bells are suspended from the eaves at the corners of pagodas or temples, and when the wind blows produce a very sweet but melancholy sound.

Then a burst of sweet music so plaintively thrilling,
Was caught up by the echoes[1] who sang the refrains,
In their many-toned voices—the atmosphere filling
With a chorus of dulcet mysterious strains.

The sleepers arouse and with beating hearts listen,
In their dreams they had heard that weird music before;
It touches each heart—with tears their eyes glisten,
For it tells them of those they may never see more.

In fancy those notes to their childhood's days brought them,
To those far-away scenes they had not seen for years;
To those who had loved them, had reared them and taught them,
And the eyes of those stern men became wet with tears.

Bright visions of home through their mem'ries came thronging,
Panorama-like passing in front of their view;
They were *home-sick*, no power could withstand that strange longing,
The longer they listened, the more home-sick they grew.

[1] *Ying-shêng.* The responding sound, or oftener perhaps *'hui-hsiang.*

Whence came those sweet sounds? Who the unseen musician
That breathes out his soul which floats on the night breeze
In melodious sighs—in strains so elysian—
As to soften the hearts of rude soldiers like these?

Each looked at the other, but no word was spoken.
The music insensibly tempting them on:
They *must* return home:—ere the daylight had broken,
The enemy looked, and behold, they were gone!

There's a magic in music—a witchery in it,
Indescribable either with tongue or with pen;
The flute of *Chang-liang*,[1] in that one little minute,
Had stolen the courage of eight thousand men.

[1] *Chang-liang*, one of the officers of *Liu-pang* (the first Emperor of the former Han dynasty), the night before a battle was playing his flute on the mountain-side, when the troops of the enemy under *Pa-wang* became so affected by the melancholy strains, and with such an intense longing for home, that eight thousand of them retreated during the night. The *ranz des vaches* is said to produce a similar effect on the Swiss, *i.e. home-sickness.*

YANG-KUEI-FEI.

(A CHINESE ANACREONTIC.)

BEAUTIFUL was Yang-kuei-fei;
She was a bewitching creature;
In winning ways, in form and feature,
Who more graceful, light and free?
Who more beautiful than she?
In all the Empire who more fair?
Who had such a pure complexion?
In her every word and action,
In truth, she was beyond compare,
Peerless! exquisite! perfection!
Thousands daily sing the praise
Of Yang-kuei-fei in fifty plays.[1]

[1] The book of plays of which she is the heroine contains 50 pieces, and is still highly popular among the millions of China.

Beautiful was Yang-kuei-fei,
Sad or smiling, silent, talking,
Sitting, standing, riding, walking,
Who more graceful, light and free?
Who possessed such charms as she?
Black hair undulating, waving,
In a mass of cloudy tresses,
Ever toying, ever laving,
Lavishing their sweet caresses
On her neck and shoulders, made
Of living, moving, breathing jade:
Who more beautiful than she?

Beautiful was Yang-kuei-fei:
Eyebrows shaped like leaves of willows,
Drooping over "autumn billows;"[1]
Almond shaped, of liquid brightness,
Were the eyes of Yang-kuei-fei.
Now half-closed, now twinkling slily,
Peeping from their corners shyly,
Drooping coyly, archly glancing,
Gleaming, flashing, beaming, dancing,
Who had brighter eyes than she?

[1] *Ch'iu-po*, "autumn waves," figurative for beautiful eyes.

At one moment with tears her bright eyes would be swimming,
The next, with mischief and fun they'd be brimming.
Thousands of sonnets were writ in the praise of them;
Li-tai-pai wrote a song for each separate phase of them.

Bashfully, swimmingly, pleadingly, scoffingly,
Temptingly, languidly, lovingly, laughingly;
Witchingly, roguishly, playfully, naughtily,
Wilfully, waywardly, meltingly, haughtily
Gleamed the eyes of Yang-kuei-fei.

Beautiful was Yang-kuei-fei;
Lips more crimson than the cherry,
Pouting, sulking, laughing, merry:
Seem to murmur, "We are luscious—
Come and with your own lips brush us,
Taste us, kiss us, press us, crush us!
We will teach you what true bliss is!
Feed you on delicious kisses!
In these ruby lips of ours,
Lurk the sweets of choicest flowers:

We possess the power of giving
Life to lifeless, bliss to living!"

When she smiled, her lips unclosing,
Two rows of pearly teeth disclosing:
Cheeks of alabaster, showing
The warm red blood beneath them glowing—
Peaches, longing to be bitten—
First dew-moistened—then sun-smitten.
Four lines, Li-tai-pai has written,
In more expressive words convey
What others might in vain essay:—

"Oh! for those blushing dimpled cheeks,
That match the rose in hue![1]
If one were kissed—the other *speaks*,
By blushes—'*Kiss me too.*'"

Beautiful was Yang-kuei-fei,
In all the Empire who more fair?
Who more beautiful than she?

[1] To this day flowers and colours are named after her; the colour known by us as "rose-pink" is always called by her name.

In her every mood and action,
In truth she was beyond compare,
Peerless! exquisite! perfection!
Poets wrote her praise in song.
She was *loved* by Tang-ming-kuang.[1]

[1] *Tang-ming-kuang*, a celebrated Emperor of the Tang dynasty, about A.D. 730. *Yang-kuei-fei* was his favourite concubine.

AN IMPERIAL LOVER.

(CHINESE ANACREONTIC.)

TANG-MING-KUANG loved Yang-kuei-fei,—
Living for her, in her, with her,—
Walking by her, hither, thither—
In the pleasant summer weather,
Strolling hand-in-hand together.
Side-by-side with Yang-kuei-fei,
Listening to the play of fountains—
Climbing up the mimic mountains—
Through romantic scenery,
Of hill and lake, rock, dell and tree.

"If I had not Yang-kuei-fei,
What were all my Empire worth?
With her, earth is heaven to me,—
This is paradise on earth."

Mid-day in the lakelet found them,
Lotus leaves and blossoms round them ;
Disporting gaily in the water,
(Daily to this place he brought her).
Now an avenue they tread,
Where the trees arch over-head,—
Saving just enough of space
To catch a glimpse of heaven's face,
Showing its intensest blue,
Peering down upon the two.

"If I had not Yang-kuei-fei,
What were all this lovely scene?
With her, walking thus by me
This is heaven, and she its queen."

On the sward beneath their feet,
Flowers of every hue were springing;
Bright-plumed birds with voices sweet
Their passage here and there were winging.
Sheltered here from mid-day heat,
She taught to them the art of singing.[1]

[1] The Chinese actually say that the birds imitated her voice in their notes.

Now is heard from every tree
Leafy voices, softly uttering
Whispers, which sound mysteriously—
Like wings of angels gently fluttering.

"If I had not Yang-kuei-fei,
What were all my Empire worth?
With her, sitting thus by me,
This is paradise on earth."

Streaks of light through foliage glancing—
Mixing, blending, interlacing—
Now retreating—now advancing—
Sunbeams after shadows racing,
Flinging on the sward a net-work
Of embroidered golden fret-work—
Quaintly-beautifully grotesque,
As of *flickering* arabesque
Sculpt'd from sunbeams, light and shade,
Its ground the green enamelled glade.

"If I had not Yang-kuei-fei,
What were all this lovely scene?
With her, sitting thus by me,
This is heaven, and she its queen."

SILKEN MESHES.

(CHINESE ANACREONTIC.)

ONE by one the rich tresses fell down at her feet,
Still her hands with the scissors remorselessly played
Mid her wealth of black hair, till the work was complete,
Then she paused—and looked down on the wreck she had made.

Her sparkling eyes flashed with ineffable scorn,
As she stamped her small feet on her own raven hair;
The glory, alas! from her head had been shorn,
But her glass told her truly her face was still fair.

Then her mood became changed and she silently knelt
On those locks which just now had adorned her fair head;
Her pale face betrayed all the anguish she felt,
As, with fast falling tears, she whispering said:

"Take them all to your master and tell him to plait
From these black silken tresses new strings for his lute;
Their cords 'neath his touch will not cease to vibrate
On those of his heart, till he answers my suit.

"Bid him look on them thus, and recall to his mind,
How they were when he used to toy with them of yore:—
When he severed but *one*, which he kissed and entwined
Round his finger and mine—while he solemnly swore:

"If ever I part with this dear lock of hair—
Or slight you—or love you less dearly than now,
May my bosom be tortured by grief and despair,
And 'Dark Heaven' fail *me*, if I fail in my vow!"

How potent is Love!—Yang-fei knew its power,
She, a short time before, from the Court had been driven;
Her hair, with the message, had gone scarce an hour,
When *he* sent in answer, "*Come back, you 're forgiven.*"

DREAM MUSIC.

If 'tis a dream, I pray that I may never
Again awaken from a scene like this;
If it is real, oh! may it last for ever!
Dreaming or real, in either case 'tis bliss.

This must be heaven, and I, a common mortal,
Stand awe-struck in the midst of these vast halls;
I view the rainbow roof, the glittering portal,
The ambient star-encrusted ether walls.

Roof, walls, and blue and gold mosaic flooring
Seem blent in one—whose ever-changing hues,
Gilded by rays of light from all sides pouring,
Form endless grand kaleidoscopic views.

On a gold throne, whose radiating brightness
Dazzles the eyes—enhaloing the scene ;
Sits a fair form, arrayed in snowy whiteness,
She is Chang-o,[1] the beauteous Fairy Queen.

Rainbow-winged angels softly hover o'er her,
Forming a canopy above the throne ;
A host of fairy beings stand before her,
Each robed in light and girt with meteor zone.

Angelic lips high in mid-air are breathing
Tissues of dulcet sounds, and as they fall,
Voices beneath with these are interwreathing,
And films of golden music fill the hall.

[1] *Chang-o*, a goddess in the Palace of the Moon, in a dream conducts Yang-kuei-fei to the "Great Cool Palace," *Kuang-han-kung*, where she listens to fairy music. On her awaking, she immediately sets the music she has dreamed to a song she composes, which she calls "Rainbow-winged Robes." The Emperor gives the music to Li-kuei-nien, so that his singers may practise it. While rehearsing it, a musician, hearing it from the outside of the palace, is struck with its beauty, and notes the music down. Some time after when the capital is taken by rebels and Li has fled, he encounters the man, who is singing this song in the streets for a living.

Its every note is in my bosom sinking,
E'en as parched ground absorbs heaven's genial showers ;
'Tis odour—fragrance—incense,—I am drinking
Essence of music dropped from choral flowers.

If 'tis a dream, I pray that I may never
Again awaken from a scene like this ;
If it is real, oh ! may it last for ever !
Dreaming or real, in either case 'tis bliss.

THE DEATH OF "YANG-KUEI-FEI."

In silence unbroken,
They sat side by side;
Not a word had been spoken :—
They both of them tried
The dread that was o'er them
Of what lay before them
In their bosoms to hide.

What is that? In the distance a murmur is heard,
Is't the wail of the night wind—the surge of the sea?
As nearer it floats it takes form in a word—
And that word, Oh, God! is the name Yang-kuei-fei!
They listen, but speak not—though *both* know full well
Those murmuring sounds are for *one* a death-knell.

Nearer,—still nearer
Those hoarse murmurs came:
Now they sound clearer,
They shout out a name.
'Tis Yang-fei's name they call!
"Break her accursed thrall!
Too long we have borne it—
This night,—we have sworn it—
Her life pays for all!

"Where is she,—your minion,—frail Yang-kuei-fei?
Drag her forth—the vile traitress! our daggers would see
If in her fair body the blood flows more pure
Than in those of your subjects who have had to endure
Wrongs, which her arts have heaped on them for years;[1]—
Whose bread has been moistened by blood, sweat and tears!—

[1] One of the many complaints against Yang-kuei-fei, was her fancy for fresh *Li-chiks*. She was so fond of these, that she had them, when in season, brought from the South to Chang-An daily, a distance of 3,000 *li*. This apparently simple fancy was the cause of immense suffering, distress, and injustice;—the messengers carrying the luxury, presuming on the protection of their mistress, committed all manner of depredation and violence.

Whose sons have been slaughtered—whose daughters defiled!—

Whose homes have been pillaged—whose fields made a wild!

'Tis she is the cause of rebellion and strife,[1]

We fight not your foes till we've taken her life!"

"Nought but the blood
Of Yang-kuei-fei
Can stem this flood
Of anarchy!

"Oh! bitter destiny!
Oh! dire necessity!
Must I pronounce your doom?
Consign you to the tomb?

[1] Yang-kuei-fei had intrigued with a noble named An-lu-shan, who afterwards raised the standard of rebellion, it is said, with the hope of obtaining possession of her. Be that as it may, the Emperor assembled a large army, and, accompanied by Yang-kuei-fei, went to meet him. On arriving at a place called Ma-kuei in Sze-chuen, the Emperor's troops mutinied, declaring that Yang-kuei-fei was the cause of the rebellion, and demanding her life, otherwise they would not fight. The Emperor, having no alternative, was forced to comply. Some say he ordered her to be strangled, and that this was done by the soldiers; others again, that she strangled herself—the latter appears the correct version.

Alas! my Yang-kuei-fei,
I'm powerless to save!
My life—throne—empire—all I'd give,
Had I the power to bid you live—
To snatch you from the grave.
Yet *they* have willed it thus—and I
Who'd die to save you, bid you die."

"See I am calm,—it is not death I fear,
It is their savage mode of death I dread;
Say could you bear to see me lying here,
Weltering in blood, by ruthless butchers shed?

"Fancy their bloody hands wreathed in my hair—
That silken hair you used so much to prize;
Dragged—struck—faint—bleeding!—could you bear
To see all this before your very eyes?

"Pierced by a hundred knives, my live-blood flows
In purple streams,—could you look on and see,
Unmoved—my murderers watch my dying throes—
With hungry eyes gloat on my agony?

"I have been vile, but let my penitence
In these last moments that to me are given,

Make some atonement for my great offence,
And, Oh! 'forgive me as you'd be forgiven!'

"One last entreaty—let me die alone—
Let no one enter—none but you stand by,
To watch my death;—the act too, be my own;
Let not th' ignoble rabble see me die.

"The means are here; I have but to unloose
This silken girdle from my slender waist;
I knot it thus, and thus, and form a noose,
This by my own hand round my neck is placed.

"With my own hands the ends are tightly drawn,
And I die thus"—scarce had the words been said—
A few brief struggles, and Yang-fei had gone
"With all her imperfections on her head."

"Hide her from my sight!
Let me not see
That face so ghastly white—
Those eyes so wildly bright
Glaring at me!

"They follow mine everywhere,
Look where I may—
On the earth—in the air,
Still the same glassy stare.
Take them away!

"Place her gently in the grave
E'en as she fell;
Here—where the willows wave
Near this old well.
Lightly cover her with earth—
Oh! Yang-kuei-fei!
What is all my empire worth
Now I've lost thee!"

THE GRAVE OF YANG-KUEI-FEI.

FOUR hundred maidens stood around the grave of Yang-kuei-fei;—
For *he* had sworn no other *man* her jade-like form should see;
A gloomy silence fell on all, unbroken by a word,
Nought but the sharp unceasing click of pick and spade was heard.

The work proceeded slowly, for pick and spade were plied
By gentle hands unused to work—to toil like this untried;
For none but maiden hands should dare Yang-fei's corse to displace,
And none, save his, but maiden eyes should look upon her face.

And still the work proceeded, and still the king stood by
With folded arms—with twitching lips, with wild and restless eye,

Aloof from all the maidens, watching the work of those
Who in a few more minutes would her livid corse disclose.

One feeble light whose glimmering ray fell on the open tomb,
Served but to throw on all around a deeper, denser gloom;
The hour—the grave, the diggers,—it was a weird-like scene—
That shadowy group awaiting the body of the queen.

"Now, now, be careful, I would have her body disinterred
Just as she fell, e'en as she lies, no limb be even stirred;
Her clothing must not be displaced—redouble all your care,
And raise her gently up.—Great Heaven! *The body is not there!*"

The maidens shrieked with terror, the king grew deadly pale,
The sighing breeze seemed changed into a plaintive human wail;
"What means this horrid mystery? Dig deeper, deeper still!
She *must* be there! Dig on, nor dare to disobey my will!"

The maidens tremblingly obeyed, the king looked sternly on,
Till even *he* became convinced the corse was really gone.
Clothes, jewels, all had disappeared, no vestige could they see,—
Save a little broidered scent-bag[1] of the hapless Yang-kuei-fei.

[1] It is a fact that the Emperor ordered four hundred women to be employed to exhume the body of the unfortunate Yang-kuei-fei, not willing that any *men* should see it; it is also equally true that the body had disappeared, in what manner no one appeared to be able to tell. It is popularly believed, however, that she became a fairy, leaving the scent-bag she wore at the time of her death and burial, as a relic for the emperor.

In after years, an old woman who kept a wine-shop used to exhibit for a trifle one of the stockings worn by Yang-kuei-fei; whether worn by her at the time of her death or not we are not told. Numbers of people used to flock to the wine-shop to see it, for though detested while living, there must have been a sort of sympathy with her on account of her unhappy fate when dead. Morbid curiosity seems to have been prevalent with them then, as with us now.

THE AZALEA.[1]

As I've come to your village to stay a short time,
A ballad[2] I'll sing without reason or rhyme;
I may sing out of tune,—too low or too high,
I cannot please all, but, however, I'll try.

[1] The Azalea was selected as a fair specimen of an improvised song, and also as one showing the immense amount of historical information some of these improvisatores will glibly run off in rhyme. The reader will perceive, too, in one or two places, where the singer was comparatively at a loss for matter, how readily he has been able to introduce something in rhyme, foreign to the subject, but sufficient to give him breathing time, as it were to catch up the thread, and proceed without any palpable hindrance.

As for the versification, it is simply in rhyme and no more, indeed it has been found difficult to put it into English verse at all, and still keep close to the Chinese text. Its novelty and the amount of information it contains must be its chief recommendation, for that it is novel there can be no doubt, as I do not remember ever having met even the word improvise in any Anglo-Chinese works except my own, much less a specimen in that style.

This was sent a short time ago as a contribution to the "China Review."

[2] Ballads, or mountain songs. These are generally improvised into verse from whatever comes uppermost in the singer's mind. Chinese

If you ask me to sing,—you shall not ask me twice,
Bid me *yu-lo*[1] a boat,—that I'll do in a trice;
Invite me to drink, and I'll empty the glass;
If you want me to wed,—just produce the young lass.

A ballad is hard to begin, you 're aware;
Ripe cherries are nice, but the tree 's hard to rear;[2]
White rice is good food, but the field 's hard to hoe;
Fresh fish soup is nice, but the net 's hard to throw.

If *you 'll* sing a ballad, I 'll give you a theme,
"The water plays ball with the stones in the stream;"
"The rosy-tailed carp sports about in the wave;"
"The aspen it quivers and bends like a slave."

Should one subject fail when a ballad you sing,—
If—drawing a bow you perchance break the string,—

are adepts in this art, and a hawker or pedlar will dilate on the quality of his wares in verse, a countryman on the beauty of his fields, the comforts of home, &c. In fact almost every Chinaman seems gifted with versification in some way or other. In this case the azalea has been made the foundation of the ballad and its various colours suggested, what has appeared to the singer, appropriate themes.

[1] To *scull* a boat.

[2] Young cherry trees are extremely difficult to rear in China, probably not one in a hundred coming to perfection. When full grown they are as hardy as other fruit trees.

A piece of stout silk will the string repair soon,
In like manner join a new subject or tune.

From this thing to that in my singing I go,
Like a grass-cutter wielding his scythe to and fro;
A pedlar don't usually carry good ware;
In threading of beads we don't choose here and there.

One not constantly singing forgets all he knows;
If the road is not travelled the grass quickly grows;
If a knife is not used the rust soon appears:
Friendship too will get rusty by absence or years.

I'm now going to sing,—and it's worth hearing too,
In a battle his foes were all routed by *Fu*;[1]
Man and horse both retired at the sound of the gong;—
Wait a moment and then I'll proceed with my song.

[1] Fu-cha, the king of Wu, or as it is called, "the fighting kingdom." Chan-kuo, before Christ about 300 years, on this occasion seems to have beaten the troops of his adversary Ku-tsien the king of Yüeh. It is said of the king of Yüeh that, on being insulted once by the king of Wu, he swore never to rest till he had avenged the insult. He persistently nursed his vengeance, sleeping on straw, and tasting the juice of gall,—to add bitterness probably to the intensity of his hatred. He finally accomplished his object, destroying the kingdom of Wu, and driving its king into exile.

In four lines of this ballad two truths I will tell;
A gutter, by digging, becomes a canal;
A girl, when she weds, of course changes her name,
If she lives long enough she becomes an old dame.

Some like to hear songs, some themselves like to sing.
Those who like best to listen your seats hither bring;
If you like a good song, hear me sing at your ease;
If you don't,—you can listen or not, as you please.

When a noble goes out two large gongs are beat;
A priest says his *Mi-to*[1] aloud in the street;
The player chaunts love songs,—by ladies admired;
But the ploughman sings ballads to cheer him when tired.

In singing a ballad the voice should be clear,
But yet not so harsh as to grate on the ear;
Each word be distinct, and the metre be true.
If you don't like it that way, I'll sing till you do.

The azalea opens—its petals are green.
King Chao[2] lent an ear to Ta-chi his base queen,

[1] O-mi-to-fo, "Amida Buddha."

[2] Chao was the last emperor of the Shang dynasty; his barbarity is execrated to this day. Among other modes of torture invented by this

Through her, loyal subjects were tortured and slain;
His deeds caused rebellion which shortened his reign.

The azalea's petals are now tinged with gold.
Tai-Kung[1] met Wen-wang when nigh eighty years old,
Through him came the Chou's, by him Chao was o'erthrown.
Wên's descendants sat eight hundred years on the throne.

The azalea opens—its petals are red.
Sun-Pin[2] understood warlike arts, for 'tis said,
He "the whole art of war" from a monkey obtained;
From the "Seven Countries"[3] riches and honour he gained.

monster was the "brass pillar." This was a hollow pillar of brass filled with live charcoal; a victim was made to embrace this till death put an end to his sufferings. His favourite concubine Ta-chi was more barbarous, if possible, than the emperor. One of her greatest amusements was betting or guessing whether a woman was pregnant of a boy or a girl, and to satisfy her curiosity would cause them to be ripped open in her presence.

[1] Ta-kung's family name was Chiang, he had been a fisherman; at the age of eighty he was invited to become prime minister; by his aid the Shang dynasty was overthrown, and the Chou dynasty firmly established. Thirty-four of Wên-wang's descendants reigned in succession.

[2] Sun-pin was a clever general of the first 'Han dynasty; he wrote a book on military tactics called *Liu-chia-ping-shu.* The work is used to the present time. It is popularly believed, however, that a monkey presented him with this valuable book.

[3] The first emperor of the 'Han dynasty gave a kingdom to each of

The azalea opens—its petals are blue.
In search of a name went adventurous Su ;[1]
But failing at Chin empty-handed returned,
And Su by his own wife was heartlessly spurned.

The azalea opens, with fragrance imbued.
'Han-hsin[2] grasped his spear and King-Pa pursued ;
That *one* night Hsiao-'ho,[3] 'Han-hsin's services sought,
Untold gold for each moment and 'twould be cheaply bought.

his seven sons ; these were all tributary to him. The names of the kingdoms were Chin, Chu, 'Han, Chi, Chao, Yen, and Wei.

[1] Su-chin was a poor student in the time of the Fighting Kingdom, A.D. 337. He set out from home as an adventurer, hoping in those troubled times to get employment of some sort under government ; failing in this he returned home, when his wife, who was weaving, would not speak to him, or even raise her eyes from her work, and his brother's wife refused to cook anything for him to eat. He again set forth in search of employment, and this time he was successful, obtaining a lucrative appointment. On his return home afterwards, he was received with great respect by his family, his wife kneeling before him. Su-chin perceiving the difference, bitterly remarked, "In poverty my family disowned me, now I'm rich they respect me."

[2] 'Han-hsin, a celebrated general. He was at one time in the lowest depths of poverty and an old woman supplied him on one occasion with a meal ; afterwards when he became a general he made the old woman a present of a thousand taels.

[3] Hsiao-'ho was a secretary. He established the five kinds of punishment and framed all the laws of the 'Han dynasty. When the

The azalea's petals are yellow again.
'Han-hsin pursued King-pa [1] o'er mountain and plain;
Close by Wu-chiang-kou King-Pa's course was run,
He died by his own hand, unseen but by *One.*

The azalea's petals are burdened with scent.
The Princess Wang-chao [2] past the frontiers went;
She plunged in the stream as it rolled slowly by,—
For the sake of her honour she knew how to die.

Ch'in dynasty was overthrown, all the generals, intent on plunder, searched everywhere for valuables or treasure, but Hsiao-'ho sought only for state papers and books, by which means he possessed a knowledge of the working of government. He, fully alive to the value of 'Han-hsin's ability as a general, engaged him. The sequel showed that his services were invaluable.

[1] King-Pa was the opponent of the empire of the 'Han dynasty. He was merciless in disposition, and burnt, ravaged and destroyed wherever he went, so that he was detested by the people. When pursued by 'Han-hsin and finding he could not escape, he committed suicide by cutting his throat at a place near the mouth of the Black river, Wu-chiang. Thus closed the life of King-Pa, but his cruel deeds live in the memory of every Chinese, so much so that things of a peculiarly severe nature are sometimes called after him. There is a straight thorny cactus grown in Peking known only by the name of "King-Pa's whip," and a round sort, also very thorny, is called "King-Pa's fist."

[2] See "Crossing the Boundary Line," p. 3.

The azalea opens—its petals are grey.
Liang-chi,[1] the two princes endeavoured to slay;
He vainly aspired to the throne, too, as well,
By the hand of a fish-wife he ignobly fell.

The azalea opens—its petals are black.
Wan-chia saved the fish-wife and brought her safe back;
When she an imperial princess was made,
His kindness to her she with honours repaid.

The azalea's sharp-pointed petals unfold.
Chia-jen,[2] when proscribed, as a pedlar books sold;
An old fisher and daughter soon came to his aid,
And at night far from foes he was safely conveyed.

The azalea's petals are varied in hue.
At 'Hu-lao-kuan three men fought with Lu-pu;[3]

[1] Liang-chi, a minister of the 'Han dynasty, plotted to destroy the two young princes as the first step to ascending the "dragon throne," to which he aspired. Wan-chia-chun, a physiognomist, advised him against this nefarious design, but his advice was not heeded. A fisher-woman rescued the princes and stabbed the minister; both the physiognomist and the fisher-woman afterwards attained to high honours, the former chiefly through the influence of the latter.

[2] These characters occur in dramatic, but not in historical works.

[3] Lu-pu was a general, and the adopted son of Tung-cho, a clever

Tung-cho tried by force to abduct one Tiao-chan.
'Twas part of Wang-ssŭ-tu's own deep-laid plan.

The azalea opens disclosing its heart.
Wang-ssŭ-tu instructed Tiao-chan in her part;
Tung-cho and Lu-pu fought for her in the bower;
Lu-pu's spear from the casque of Tung-cho bore the flower.

The azalea's petals their rich odours shed.
Liu-tê[1] was invited Liu-shang-hsiang to wed;
Within "Sweet Dew Temple" the empress espied
Liu-tê with the brave Chao-tzŭ-lung at his side.

but unscrupulous minister. Wang-ssŭ-tu, also an able minister, wishing to break the coalition of two such powerful men, resorted to stratagem to set them at variance with each other. Carefully instructing a faithful handmaiden in her part, he offered her, as his daughter, to Lu-pu, and again to Tung-cho; this caused the two to quarrel and eventually to fight for the girl, Lu-pu being the victor. He afterwards joined with Wang-ssŭ-tu and assisted in destroying Tung-cho.

[1] Liu-tê, an emperor of the 'Han dynasty. Sun-chuan, king of the Wu country, invited him to come and marry his sister, but in reality to kill him. The king's mother seeing the emperor Liu-tê with his faithful body-guard Chao-tzŭ-lung in the "Sweet Dew Temple," and hearing it rumoured what was to be his fate, at once goes to the palace, reproaches her son with his perfidy, and insists on the marriage really taking place, which is accordingly done; and Liu-tê eventually escapes from the country through the exertions of his wife.

The azalea's petals are withered and brown.
At the shout of Chang-fei [1] Pa-ling bridge toppled down;
At the sound of a voice the bridge severed and fell;—
Friendships sometimes are broken in that way as well.

The azalea's petals the hue of blood wear.
Thrice the brass banner waved—thrice Chin-chiung [2] charged there.
Lo-chêng to the flagstaff was bound; but his wife
Braved the arrows aimed at him and shielded his life.

[1] Chang-fei at this time was pursued by the enemy, and his forces being numerically inferior he had probably undermined the bridge, and the shout was the signal for it to fall. However it may have been, it is an undoubted fact that the bridge fell at his word.

[2] Chin-chiung was a rebel chief. Troops had been sent out to take him by Yang-ling, the prince of Tung-chou in Shan-tung. He was alone, and hemmed in on all sides, and a stage was erected on which stood a man with a copper flag with which he signalled where Chin-chiung was. Twice he unsuccessfully tried to cut his way through them; a friend of his, however, among his foes shot the signalman with an arrow. The soldiers, seeing no signal, were at a loss which direction to take, and Chin-chiung dashed through them, making his escape. It is said Lo-chêng, the man who shot the arrow, was tied to the flagstaff, and made a target of, but his wife bravely screened him with her own body, and succeeded in releasing him.

The azalea's petals are crimson in hue.
Jên-Kuei[1] crossed the sea Corea to subdue;
Prince Chin leaped the torrent crag to crag through its spray,
One man *only*—Yu-chih—all his foes kept at bay.[2]

The azalea's petals are ruddy in hue.
Jên-kuei crossed the sea Corea to subdue;
The Shan-tung "Sounding Horse" with their chief Chin-shu-pao,[3]
Lined the roads one by one like the trees at Tuan-chiao.

The azalea's petals are crimson in hue.
Jên-kuei crossed the sea Corea to subdue;

[1] Jên-kuei was a general of the Tang dynasty, sent to compel the Coreans to pay their tribute, which they had failed to do for some years.

[2] This would probably be a narrow pass where one resolute man could for a short time check a number.

[3] "Sounding Horse." These men, as the name implies, were mounted, each horse having bells round its neck, said to caution wayfarers the riders were coming, in addition to which they would let fly an arrow, as a hint for them to escape if they could, laxness on the part of the authorities rendering them very bold. Chin-su-pao was their leader; he afterwards became a general in the imperial army.

Ku-ching-tei [1] resigned office—to his homestead returned,
And there to grow melons—like Sang-yang—he learned.

The azalea opens,—its petals are grey.
Liu,[2] in poverty, once was a watchman, they say ;
In a garden he found an old book and a sword,
He became after that the revolted Tang's lord.

The azalea, now blue, now an azure may be.
Li gave birth to a son who was well named Yao-chi ;
When grown up and conducted to prison, Old Tou
Cried, "Liu's come again who was here long ago."

[1] Ku-ching-tei was the rival of Jên-kuei in power and influence, when the latter became too powerful Ku-ching resigned office and returned back to husbandry.

[2] Liu-chih-yuan was one of the emperors of the after 'Han dynasty ; he suffered many vicissitudes of fortune. On one occasion his wife, who was pregnant, was left with his brother's family. The wife of the brother treated her brutally, making her, the very day she gave birth to her child, turn the mill to grind corn, and carry water for the cattle. When she was confined, she had no one to attend on her, her sister-in-law even refusing to lend her a pair of scissors to cut the "navel string" of her child ; she was therefore compelled to bite it off. The child ever after that, bore the name of Yao-chi, "Bitten Navel." When Yao-chi grew up, he was out one day hunting, and in pursuit of a hare, followed it to a well, where he met his mother who was drawing water, and whom he had not seen for years.

The azalea's petals are yellow once more.
Li bit off the navel of the child that she bore;
One day when out hunting he news chanced to get,
At a well drawing water his mother he met.

The azalea's petals are tinted with red.
Jui-lan met Chiang-shih,[1] in an inn they were wed;
The mirror at parting they had broken in twain
Was, like those two hearts, reunited again.

The azalea is fragrant and whiter than snow.
Chin was guided a thousand *li* safely by Chou:[2]

[1] This couple had been betrothed in their childhood but circumstances separated them for years; then they met by accident, recognised one another and consummated their wedding in an inn.

[2] Chao-tai-tsu was the first emperor of the Sung dynasty, A.D. 960. Before he came to the throne and while the country was in a very unsettled state, he safely escorted a maiden named Chin-niang to her home, a distance of a thousand *li*. Under such circumstances they were necessarily constantly together, yet he treated her with the utmost delicacy, never once forgetting his duty as a knight-errant. Afterwards when he commanded the imperial troops of the Chou dynasty at a place called Chen-chiao, the whole of the assembled generals put the yellow robe on him, and forced him to become emperor. The words "on horseback" are an exact equivalent for our "martial," as a martial king, &c. Curiously enough the sounds are very similar, *ma-shang*, by speaking the latter character shortly, representing the word *martial* in sound as well as in meaning.

When Hou's troops revolted the empire he gained,
Eighteen years as a monarch on "horseback" he reigned.

The azalea's six leaves are smoothly arrayed.
Yüeh-fei [1] by the traitor Chin-'huei was betrayed;
Twelve warrants were sent ere he answered one,
When he did, they butchered both father and son.

The azalea 's opened to its fullest extent.
Old Wu [2] to sell cakes in "Long Street" daily went;

[1] Chin-'huei was a treacherous minister of the Sung dynasty, in the time of Kao-tsung. Yüeh-fei was engaged in a battle with the troops of the Chin country and was gaining the victory. Chin-'huei perceiving it, and having his own reasons,—he being in communication with the enemy,—sent twelve special warrants for Yüeh-fei to come to him, and by that means cause him, by his absence from the ranks, to lose the advantages he had already gained. Yüeh-fei refused to attend to these repeated summonses till the twelfth, when he reluctantly quitted the field accompanied by his son. On his approach Chin-'huei ordered both father and son to be slain.

[2] Wu-tai-lang is one of the characters in a novel called the *Chin-ping-mei.* He is a weakly diminutive person and gets a living by selling cakes; his wife is a beautiful but most depraved woman, and attempts to captivate Wu-sung, the brother of the cake-seller, an honest straightforward fellow, with her blandishments, but is repulsed by him, and he quits the house to prevent further trouble. The wife falls in love with another man who is very wealthy and influential, by name 'Hsi-mên-ching, and being discovered, poisons her husband under most

His wife plied the wine and her blandishments cast
On his brother,— her wiles were detected at last.

The azalea's six leaves are as smooth as may be.
Pan-chia-yun[1] intrigued with the priest Wên-'hai-li,
Shih-hsiu with Yang-hsiung "to talk over it" came,
And murdered the faithless but beautiful dame.

The azalea opens—its petals are blue.
Many rebels assembled, among them was Wu.
Though he had but one arm, their bold leader he caught,
He once slew a tiger,—he 's a real hero thought.

The azalea opens, the colour of clay.
Wei[2] the eunuch used power to pillage and slay;

horrible and revolting circumstances. The brother eventually kills the wife on hearing the story of the murder. At the opening of the tale Wu-sung is brought into the town as a hero, having slain a tiger which had long been a terror to the neighbourhood. He was such a powerful man that when he had lost an arm, with his remaining one he captured a notorious robber. See next verse but one.

[1] Pan-chiao-yun, a very handsome woman, became infatuated with a Buddhist priest named Wên-'hai-li. The husband, discovering her perfidy, murdered her on a hill called Tsui-ping-shan.

[2] This was one of the eunuchs of the palace, in the Ming dynasty.

As if 'twas the "Sacred Will"—this did not last long.
He slew among others, the faithful Shun-chang.

The azalea's six petals are even and red.
The thunder of heaven struck Sai-lo-i dead.
Tou-o [1] tightly bound was awaiting death's blow
On the third of the sixth, when it came on to snow.

The azalea opens—its petals are brown.
Cheng-yüan-ho [2] wandered through hamlet and town;
The "Fall of the Lily" he sang for his bread,
Of the "Forest of Pencils" he at last was the head.

He became so presumptuous that he made no hesitation in using the emperor's name to further his own nefarious schemes, causing the deaths of many loyal ministers. He was, however, finally detected and executed.

[1] See "Snow in Summer," p. 115.

[2] Cheng-yüan-ho was a young man of the Tang dynasty, who having squandered all his patrimony in profligacy was reduced to beggary. One of the courtezans, however, on whom he had formerly lavished much money, really loved him, and persuaded him to study, she herself supporting him in the meantime and encouraging him in his studies; he afterwards passed his examination successfully and became a *Chuang-yüan*, Chief of the 'Han-lin literati. In gratitude to the girl for her kindness to him in his poverty, and efforts for his good, he, on obtaining this rank, made her his wife.

The azalea opens—its petals are blue.
To the gates of Peking Li-chuang[1] ravaged and slew;
Chung-chên died on "Coal Hill," on his death being known
The first of the Ch'ings, Shun-chih, sat on the throne.

The azalea opens—its petals are grey.
Next Kang-hsi, then Yung-cheng, then Chien-lung[2] had sway;
He travelled his subjects' affection to gain;
Delighted, all wished him a long happy reign.

The azalea opens—its petals are white.
Chia-ching was discerning, and governed aright;
Propitious seasons made poverty cease,
In his reign the empire enjoyed a long peace.

[1] Li-chuang was a notorious rebel chief who overrun the Chinese empire at the close of the Ming dynasty. He at last entered the city of Peking. Chung-chên, the last of the Ming dynasty, hung himself on Mei-shan, Coal Hill, or as it is oftener called by foreigners "Prospect Hill." See "Journal of the N. C. Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society," vol. vii., "Chinese Legends" by G. C. Stent.

[2] Chien-lung did more to gain the affection of his subjects than any other monarch before or since; he made a tour of inspection to Hang-chou in Kiang-nan, thus proving that the "Son of Heaven" is not compelled to remain within the precincts of the palace invisible and unapproachable.

The azalea opens—its blooming is done.
Tao-kuang[1] the Just governs "all under the sun;"
"Within the four seas" peace and plenty appears,
May he live to rule over us myriads of years.

[1] This ballad was evidently written in the reign of Tao-kuang. Since then, as the reader may be aware, two other emperors have ascended the throne—Hsien-fêng and T'ung-chih, the present youthful emperor.

THE FIVE WATCHES.[1]

I.

In the first watch,
The moon shone on the flower terrace.
I had heard from my lover that at night he would come.
I bade my maid buy a few ounces of wine,
With four plates of vegetables, and spread the table.
I waited a little, but he did not come.
Again I waited, still he came not.
And I knew not where he was, or what detained him.
I took up my embroidered shoes,
But I had no heart to change them.
I slowly wiped away the falling tears from my eyes.

[1] The Chinese night is divided into five watches :—

The first begins about 9 P.M., called Ting-ching, "Setting the watch"; the second begins about 11 P.M., called Erh-ching, Second Watch; the third begins about 1 A.M., called San-ching, Third Watch; the fourth begins about 3 A.M., called Ssù-ching, Fourth Watch; the fifth begins about 5 A.M., called Wu-ching, Fifth Watch.

The watches are arranged according to the length of the night, commencing earlier or later as the case may be.

2.

In the second watch,
The moon was high.
How annoying of my lover! Why has he not come?
Tears fell from my "autumn wave almond eyes."
I wept till in hue they vied with the cherry.
I railed. "You thief! Oh, how vexing!
How is it you come not?
You should not deceive me,
And you *have* done so often.
One may kill by deceit, *that's* no capital crime.
Methinks, if you are this kind of person
How can we continue intimate?"

3.

In the third watch,
The moon was in the west.
I was in my room lonely and disconsolate;
Yet full of kind loving thoughts.
"Ah! you do not wish to come!
You say 'I'll come,' yet you come not!"
The lamp even is not bright.
My bed is cold as ice.

I bade my maid light a fire in the stove by my side.
The fire-stove even is more warm than my lover,
Yet *that* cannot answer like *him* when I speak.

4.

In the fourth watch,
The moon was in the west.
But I do not e'en know where 's the home of my lover.
" You have plucked the fresh flower,
Half open, half drooping.
How long will it be ere the blossom will fade?
Since sixteen or seventeen,
When I gave myself to you,
Had I ever a thought in my heart but of you?
'Tis fully three years now since we 've been together,
Yet *when*, day or night, was I faithless to you?"

5.

In the fifth watch,
The moon waned, 'twas broad daylight.
Suddenly I heard a man's voice from without.
I need no one to tell me, 'tis my lover arrived!

With both hands I close my ears,
And pretend I can't hear him.
He calls out, "Quick, open the door!
I have but been out to study.
If you open the door and allow me to enter,
Till my death I can never your kindness repay.
Ah, I call her, she gives me no answer!
She makes me stand here till my very calves ache.
You, girl, are within—*you* kindly plead for me.
If you will kindly intercede for me,
I'll buy you some things as reward for your kindness.
Scissors—steel needles—
I'll buy half-a-pound of floss silk—
Peking soap, too—
Soo-chow handkerchiefs,
To-day what I promise, to-morrow I'll buy.
I don't lie in the least, nor am I a boaster."
The two entered the chamber.
Smelt the fragrant cassia blossoms.
"I don't know where you 've been,
Gossiping over your affairs.
Women are like cassia flowers.
Why do they throw themselves away on the men?"
Both continued to quarrel;

She, enraged, tore her clothing,
The maid standing by, cried out, "Oh, Miss!
Tear up your own clothing?
And 'tis you that must make them!
Would it not be much better
To give him a few gentle slaps with the hand?"
The youth knelt down before her—
"Hear me make my confession!
From henceforth I'll try to break off this bad habit."

THE DAGGER.

MADAM was in her own room all alone,
With her heart very anxious and beating with dread,
She called to her lover in a loud warning tone,
"Pray don't come, my husband is *au fait!*" she said.
Turr-r-r-iko-iko-i-ya!
Turr-r-r-iko-iko-i-ya!
Turr-i-ya![1]
"My husband is *au fait!*" she said.

"I had a good beating last night ('twas too bad);
This morn, it was just about break of day,
He ground up a bright glittering knife that he had;
He seeks but for vengeance, find you where he may.
Turr-r-r, &c.
But for vengeance, find you where he may.

[1] Imitating the sharpening of a knife on a grindstone.

"Your body is fragile, your strength is but slight;
In years but a youth, (How old can you be?)
Thus to lose your dear life. Is there safety in flight?
Ah, no, 'twould be hard from your sad fate to flee!
Turr-r-r, &c.
'Twould be hard from your sad fate to flee!"

The lover exclaimed, "Dearest, did you ne'er hear
How 'Huang-tsao of old, in the course of his life,
Slew nearly eight millions of men? I don't fear,
To encounter the flash of the murderer's knife!
Turr-r-r, &c.
The flash of the murderer's knife!

"Man may live to a hundred, but at last he *must* die.
The tree becomes old, and its foliage fades.
As 'tis so with them, so also must I
Return back my life to the region of shades.
Turr-r-r, &c.
Be a ghost, but the most bewitching of shades."

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